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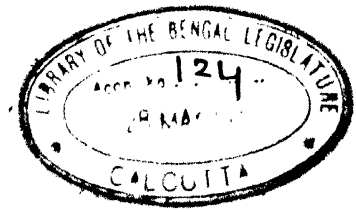
Assembly Proceedings

Official Report

Bengal Legislative Assembly

Seventeenth Session, 1943

The 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th September, 1943



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1943

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

His Excellency Sir THOMAS GEORGE RUTHERFORD, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

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The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI, in charge of the Finance Department.

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The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN, in charge of the Department of Communications and Works.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN, in charge of the Department of Agriculture (Rural Reconstruction).

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The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL, in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SPEAKER.

The Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI.

DEPUTY SPEAKER.

SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY, Esq.

SECRETARY.

K. ALI AFZAL, Esq., Barrister-at-law.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS.

A

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md. [Narayanganj East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hafiz, Md. Mirza. [Tangail West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hafiz Mia, Mr. [Kurigram South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. [Khulna (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi. [Mymensingh West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md. [Munshiganj (Muhammadan).]
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Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M. [Pabna West (Muhammadan).]
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Abdul Jabbar Palwan, Mr. Md. [Jamalpur North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Kader, Mr. [Patuakhali South (Muhammadan).]
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*Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed. [Noakhali South (Muhammadan).]
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Abdul Wahed, Maulvi. [Mymensingh East (Muhammadan).]
*Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr. [Serajganj North (Muhammadan).]
*Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M. [24-Parganas North-East (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr. (Muslim Chamber of Commerce.)

*Parliamentary Secretary.

Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md. [Birbhum (Muhammadan).]
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Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah. [Rangpur South (Muhammadan).]
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Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md. [Dacca North Central (Muhammadan).]
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Abul Fazl, Mr. Muhammad. [Madaripur West (Muhammadan).]
Abul Hashim, Maulvi. [Burdwan (Muhammadan).]
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Abul Masud, Maulvi Kazi. [Nator (Muhammadan).]
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Ahmed Hosain, Mr. [Gaibandha South (Muhammadan).]
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Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Noakhali Central (Muhammadan).]
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Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md. [Chittagong South (Muhammadan).]
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Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Manikganj East (Muhammadan).]
Azhar Ali, Maulvi. [Pabna East (Muhammadan).]

B

Badrudduja, Mr. Syed. [Berhampore (Muhammadan).]
Banerjee, Mr. Pramatha Nath. [Burdwan North-West (General).]
Banerjee, Mr. Sibnath. [Howrah (Registered Factories).]
Banerjee, Dr. Suresh Chandra. [Calcutta and Suburbs (Registered Factories).]
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Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya. [Rajshahi (General).]
Barat Ali, Mr. Mohammad. [Serajganj Central (Muhammadan).]
Barma, the Hon'ble Mr. Premhari. [Dinajpur (General).]
Barma, Mr. Puspajit. [Rangpur (General).]
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad. [Dinajpur (General).]
Barman, Mr. Upendra Nath. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]

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Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar. [Calcutta East (General).]
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B. (Anglo-Indian Constituency.)
Bhowmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra. [Midnapore East (General).]
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Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan. [Nadia (General).]
*Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal. [Jessore (General).]
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath. [Faridpur (General).]
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra. [Calcutta South (General).]

C

*Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath. [Rangpur (General).]
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan. [Bogra *cum* Pabna (General).]
Chattopadhyay, Mr. Haripada. [Nadia (General).]
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath. [24-Parganas Municipal (General).]
Chippendale, Mr. J. W. (Anglo-Indian.)
Clark, Mr. I. A. [Burdwan Division (European).]

D

Das, Babu Radha Nath. [Hooghly North-East (General).]
*Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra. [24-Parganas North-West (General).]
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan. [Murshidabad (General).]
Das, Mr. Monomohan. [Mymensingh East (General).]
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath. [Birbhum (General).]
Das Gupta, Babu Khagendra Nath. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M. [Calcutta Central (General).]
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath. [Bakarganj South-West (General).]
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Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu. [Barrackpore (Registered Factories).]

E

Edbar, Mr. Upendranath. [Bakarganj South-West (General).]
Emdadul Haque, Kazi. [Kurigram North (Muhammadan).]

F

Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M. [Jangipur (Muhammadan).]
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum. [Dacca (Muhammadan) Women.]
Fazlul Huq, Mr. A. K. [Patuakhali North (Muhammadan).]
Fazlul Qadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Chittagong North-West (Muhammadan).]
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. [Jamalpur East (Muhammadan).]
*Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca University.)

*Parliamentary Secretary.

G

Ganguly, Mr. Pratul Chandra. [East Bengal Municipal (General).]
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna. [Jessore (General).]
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Jamalpur West (Muhammadan).]
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E. [Bengal Chamber of Commerce.]
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Gupta, Mr. J. N. [Railway Trade Union (Labour).]
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh. [Darjeeling (General).]
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Al-Hadj. [Madaripur East (Muhammadan).]

H

Habibullah, Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca. [Dacca Municipal (Muhammadan).]
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Hodge, Mr. H. R. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)

I

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J

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Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed. [Satkhira (Muhammadan).]

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Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi. [Chandpur East (Muhammadan).]

K

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*Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra. [Malda (General).]
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath. [Dinajpur (General).]

L

Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh. [North Bengal Municipal (General).]
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M

MacGregor, Mr. G. G. (Indian Tea Association.)
MacPherson, Mr. G. P. [Rajshahi Division (European).]
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. [Bogra North (Muhammadan).]
*Mafizuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Tippera North (Muhammadan).]
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Mal, Mr. Iswar Chandra. [Midnapore South-West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal. [Mymensingh West (General).]
*Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari. [Burdwan North-West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra. [Faridpur (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra. [Tippera (General).]
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Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad. [Midnapore Central (General).]
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Maqbul Hosain, Mr. [Tippera North-East (Muhammadan).]

*Parliamentary Secretary.

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Miles, Mr. C. W. (Indian Tea Association.)
*Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur. [Bogra West (Muhammadan).]
Mohsin Ali, Mr. Md. [Meherpur (Muhammadan).]
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Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E. [Presidency Division (European).]
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Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi. [Bogra South (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi. [Kishoreganj South (Muhammadan).]
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Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Barrackpore Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Mukerjea, the Hon'ble Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E. (Burdwan Landholders' Constituency.)
Mukerji, Mr. Dhirendra Narayan. (Hooghly North-East.)
Mukherjee, Mr. B. [Colliery (Coal Mines) (Labour).]
Mukherji, Dr. H. C. [Calcutta *cum* Presidency Division (Indian Christian).]
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra. [Birbhum (General).]
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh. [Bankura West (General).]
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behari. [Khulna (General).]
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Pulin Behary. [Howrah (General).]
Musharruff Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Darjeeling (Muhammadan).]
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed. [Bagerhat (Muhammadan).]
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi. [Brahmanbaria North (Muhammadan).]

N

Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar. (Presidency Landholders.)
*Nasarullah, Nawabzada K. [Brahmanbaria South (Muhammadan).]
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra. [24-Parganas South-East (General).]
Nausher Ali, the Hon'ble Mr. Syed. [Jessore Sadar (Muhammadan).]
Nazimuddin, the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E. [Calcutta North (Muhammadan).]
Nooruddin, Mr. K. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Norton, Mr. H. R., M.B.E. (Calcutta Trades Association.)

P

Pain, the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah Municipal (General).]
Paul, Sir Hari Sankar. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.)

*Parliamentary Secretary.

Poddar, Mr. Anandilall. (Marwari Association.)
Powell, Mr. J. A. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan. [Malda (General).]

R

Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L. [Rajshahi Central (Muhammadan).]
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Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi. [Bogra East (Muhammadan).]
Razimuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Tippera West (Muhammadan).]
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr. [Dacca South Central (Muhammadan).]
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Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy. [Dacca East (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kamalkrishna. [Bankura East (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar. [Dacca West (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kishori Pati. [Jhargram *cum* Ghatal (General).]
Vacant. (Chittagong Landholders.)
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath. [Howrah (General).]
Roy, Mr. Patiram. [Khulna (General).]
Roy Kumar Shib Shekhareswar. (Rajshahi Landholders.)

S

Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr. [Bakarganj South (Muhammadan).]
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji. [Rangpur North (Muhammadan).]
Sahabe Alum, Mr. Syed. [Dacca Central (Muhammadan).]
Salim, Mr. S. A. [Narayanganj North (Muhammadan).]
Sanaullah, Dr. [Chittagong North-East (Muhammadan).]
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha. [Presidency Division Municipal (General).]
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar. [Murshidabad (General).]
Sarker, Babu Madhusudan. [Bogra *cum* Pabna (General).]
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra. [Dacca East (General).]
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.)
Sen, Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra. [24-Parganas South-East (General).]
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath. [Khulna (General).]
Sen Gupta, Mrs. Nelli. [Chittagong (General).]
***Serajul Islam, Mr.** [Bonguon (Muhammadan).]
Shahabuddin, the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E. [Narayanganj South (Muhammadan).]
Shahedali, Mr. [Matlabbazar (Muhammadan).]
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Kusthia (Muhammadan).]
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr. [Gopalganj (Muhammadan).]
Shamsul Huda, Maulana. [Mymensingh South (Muhammadan).]
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath. [Rangpur (General).]
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan. [Bankura West (General).]
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda. [Bengal Dooars (Western) Tea Garden Labour.]
Skipwith, Mr. W. E. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G. [Darjeeling (European).]

*Parliamentary Secretary.

Stark, Mr. A. F. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Steven, Mr. J. W. R. [Dacca (European).]
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. [24-Parganas Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar. [Noakhali (General).]

T

Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr. [Faridpur West (Muhammadan).]
Thakur, Mr. Promatha Ranjan. [Faridpur (General).]
Thorman, Mr. C. M. [Chittagong Division (European).]
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji. [Bhola South (Muhammadan).]

W

Waliur Rahman, Maulvi. [Jessore East (Muhammadan).]
Walker, Mr. J. R. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E. (Indian Jute Mills Association.)
Whitehead, Mr. R. B. (Indian Mining Association.)
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)

Y

Yousuf Mirza. [24-Parganas Central (Muhammadan).]
*Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr. [Faridpur East (Muhammadan).]

Z

Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi. [Malda North (Muhammadan).]
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A. [Hooghly *cum* Serampore (Registered Factories) Labour.]
Zillur Rahman Shah Chowdhury, Maulvi. [Balurghat (Muhammadan).]

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*Parliamentary Secretary.

THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS

Official Report of the Seventeenth Session.

Volume LXVI—No. 1.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 14th September, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 13 Hon'ble Ministers and 179 members.

Obituary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Ladies and Gentlemen, before we proceed with the business of the House, it is my sad duty to refer to the death of Maulvi Abdul Karim. Maulvi Abdul Karim was a member of the old Bengal Legislative Council from 1926 to the inauguration of the new reforms. He was an ardent nationalist and was associated for many years with the educational, cultural and political activities of the land. In him the province of Bengal lost an outstanding figure of the old generation.

I feel it my duty to send a message of sympathy to the bereaved family and I hope members will signify their assent by rising in their seats.

(Members then rose in their seats.)

Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen, Secretary will take the necessary action.

Panel of Chairmen.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of rule 6 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, I nominate the following members of the Assembly to form a panel of four Chairmen for the ensuing session :—

(1) Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq,

(2) Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy,

(3) Mr. J. R. Walker, and

(4) Mr. Hem Chandra Nasker,

unless otherwise arranged the senior member among them present in the above order will preside over the deliberations of this Assembly in my absence and in the absence of the Deputy Speaker.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Mass Literacy campaign.

*1. **Mr. MUHAMMAD ABUL FAZL:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(1) the result of the mass literacy campaign in Bengal from April, 1938, to January, 1943—

(*a*) how many people were made literate during that period,

(*b*) how many people passed the literacy test, if any,

(*c*) how many literacy centres were opened, and

(*d*) how many of the literate people were (*i*) Muslims, (*ii*) Scheduled Castes, and (*iii*) aboriginals, if any;

(2) how many workers were appointed by Government for the campaign;

(3) how many of the workers were volunteers; and

(4) what steps, if any, are being taken by Government at the present time for this campaign?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain): Owing to the present emergency the main scheme for the expansion of rural reconstruction activities in the Province including the scheme for encouragement and spread of adult education has been held in abeyance for the duration of war and the department has been allowed only to carry on. Pending therefore the initiation of the same, activities in connection with the spread of adult education are almost exclusively being carried on a voluntary basis with the assistance of the Jute Regulation Department staff and a statement furnishing the information asked for as far as available, is laid on the Library Table.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware if in any belligerent country among the allied nations major educational activities have been kept in abeyance during the progress of the war?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Major educational activities have not been kept in abeyance as far as I know.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the nature of assistance given by the Jute Regulation Department in this matter?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: They are organising night schools on a voluntary basis.

Distribution of paddy seeds to Agriculturists.

*2. **Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(a) the quantity of (1) *aus* seeds and (2) *aman* seeds that have been distributed to the agriculturists of Bengal from 1st March, 1943, up to 30th June, 1943; and

(b) the price charged per maund from the cultivators for the seeds?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (a) (1) *Aus* seeds—38,875 maunds distributed.

(2) *Aman* seeds—164,000 maunds distributed. This was up to 30th June. Since then another lakh more maunds of seeds have been distributed.

(b) *Aman* seeds have been issued on loan repayable at the harvest at the rate of 1½ maunds or Rs.20 in cash for every maund. Owing to the rise in prices, in Eastern Bengal latterly the cash equivalent has been fixed at Rs.25. The cash equivalent in all cases represents as nearly as may be the actual cost. For *aus* seeds distributed on loan, cost prices of the seeds are being charged, which varies from Rs. 12 to Rs. 16 per maund.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that not a grain of *aus* seed was distributed in the district of Rangpur during the last *aus* season?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I am sure some has been distributed but I have not got the figures before me. Without notice I cannot say.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which district got what quantities out of this 38,875 maunds of *aus* seeds distributed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Allotments, district by district, cannot be given without notice.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that rotten seeds were purchased by the Agriculture Department in the district of Rangpur for distribution in that district?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I am not aware.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that complaints were made to the authorities to that effect and that the officer in charge of that department was suspended?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I could not say about Rangpur, but in one or two places there were complaints and enquiries were made and steps taken.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the contract for the purchase of *aus* seeds was given to a compounder of the Medical Store of the Rangpur College?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I could not say that.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he is aware of?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a question.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it does not amount to an exorbitant rate of interest because they have been given the option of paying either 1½ maunds or Rs. 20 for every maund? Is the cost price very high?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: They are asked to pay back only the cost price.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that in previous years Government charged as interest only ¼ maund?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: That is a fact. The change has been effected because the prices are so high that if they go down the loss to Government will be tremendous.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: Is it not against the Bengal Money-lenders Act?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: No, it is not. In no case, the agriculturists will have to pay more than the cost price.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: Is it not a fact that the interest works out to more than 50 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In terms of money it will not be so at all, because they will have the option of paying back 1½ maunds in kind or the actual cost.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to enlighten us as to what the actual cost is?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: It will be Rs. 25.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Including interest?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: No interest, only actual cost price or in the alternative 1½ times of the crops could be repaid. The loanee will pay in terms of crop only when the price of crop is low and price of 1½ maunds will be less than 25 rupees which was the cost price.

Slaughter of cattle for supply of meat to the Military.

*3. **Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that thousands of cattle are being slaughtered every day in Bengal for the supply of meat to the Military?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing the number of cattle slaughtered, month by month, from the 1st April, 1942, to 31st May, 1943?

(*c*) Is it a fact that the price of cattle has increased by more than hundred per cent. during the period?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (*a*) and (*b*) I am aware of the slaughter of cattle for suppy of meat to the Military but I have no information as to the number consumed by the Military.

(*c*) The prices have gone up considerably but there are other factors as well leading to the rise in prices.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain what are the other factors which have contributed to the rise of price of meat?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Large mortality among the animals and also sympathetic rise in the prices of all articles with the rise in the prices of staple food crops.

Tube-wells sunk in Calcutta in apprehension of air raids.

*4. **Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state the number of tube-wells sunk in Calcutta in apprehension of air raids?

(*b*) Is it a fact that 50 per cent. of those tube-wells have become unserviceable?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the name of the Engineer in charge; and

(*ii*) what action he proposes to take against the person or persons responsible for such sinking of tube-wells?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Engineer referred to in (*c*)(*i*) has been granted an extension of service?

(*e*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) 2,496.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) to (*e*) Do not arise.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the percentage of the tube-wells that have gone out of order in Calcutta?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The actual number cannot be said, but some tube-wells went out of order, almost all of which have since been repaired.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY : মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কি অনুগ্রহ করে ব'লবেন যে প্রথম থেকেই কতগুলি tube-well অব্যবহার্য্য ছিল?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The tube-wells were sunk in the month of January, 1942, but some of the tube-wells went out of order in the month of June.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY : আমার প্রশ্ন ছিল প্রথম থেকেই কতগুলি tube-well অব্যবহার্য্য ছিল।

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I have nothing further to add.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY : মাননীয় স্পীকার সাহেব, আমার প্রশ্নের উত্তর হয় নাই। আমার প্রশ্ন হচ্ছে প্রথম থেকেই কতটা tube-well অব্যবহার্য্য ছিল।

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I have already answered that some tube-wells were found out of order in the month of June.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY : কত সংখ্যা অব্যবহার্য্য ছিল এবং প্রথম থেকেই কিনা?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: As regards the first part I have already answered that in the month of June some tube-wells went out of order. As regards the number, 404 tube-wells out of the total number went out of order.

Tender for the sinking of additional tube-wells in Calcutta.

*5. **Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the names of the contractors who submitted tenders for sinking the additional 200 tube-wells in *bustee* areas as an A.R.P. measure in Calcutta to the Chief Engineer, Public Health, Bengal;

(*ii*) the name of the contractors who submitted tenders but were not in the registered list of contractors in that department before the 13th May, 1943, the date following the last date of submitting tenders;

(*iii*) the name of the contractors among whom the proposed additional 200 tube-wells have been distributed to sink in *bustee* areas;

(*iv*) the number of tube-wells allotted to each of them;

(*v*) the rates and quotations of the tenders submitted by each of them for which the work has been distributed; and

(*vi*) the names of the contractors whose tenders were not considered as they were not in the registered list of contractors in the department?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any tube-wells were sunk by any contractors whose name did not appear in the registered list of contractors of the department before the date of opening the tenders by the Chief Engineer?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Messrs. Oriental Engineering and Mercantile Co. were in the registered list of contractors of the department—

(1) before the 13th May, 1943, and

(2) before the date of opening the tender by the Chief Engineer?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are considering the desirability of examining the cases of those contractors whose tenders were not considered by the Chief Engineer?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*)(*i*) (1) Baidyanath Biswas, (2) J. K. Das, (3) Jafar & Co., (4) Reliable Water Supply Service of India, Limited, (5) Hindusthan Traders, (6) Ahmed & Co., (7) S. P. Mullick & Co., (8) P. C. Biswas & Co., (9) Popular Tube Well Co., (10) Oriental Engineering & Mercantile Co., (11) Bhattacharjee Brothers, (12) Pioneer Iron Works, (13) Standard Tube Well Co., (14) Kishori Mohan Dhara, and (15) Water Supply Co.

(*ii*) Nos. (1), (2), (6), (15).

(*iii*) (1) S. P. Mullick & Co., (2) P. C. Biswas & Co., (3) Popular Tube Well Co., (4) Standard Tube Well Co., and (5) Oriental Engineering and Mercantile Co.

(*iv*) Item No. 1	...	60
Item No. 2	...	60
Item No. 3	...	20
Item No. 4	...	40
Item No. 5	...	20

(*v*) A statement showing the rates and quotations is laid on the Library Table.

(*vi*) *Vide* reply against item No. (*ii*).

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Messrs. Oriental Engineering Co. who are the registered contractors of this department submitted their tender in the name and style of Messrs. Oriental Engineering & Mercantile Co.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Removal of refuse from streets of Calcutta.

***6. Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government Department aware—

(*i*) that there is widespread public dissatisfaction in Calcutta owing to a steady deterioration in the arrangements of the Calcutta Corporation for removal of refuse from the streets of Calcutta; and

(*ii*) that the condition of the streets of Calcutta owing to accumulation of refuse and unsatisfactory state of refuse bins is such as to be dangerous to public health?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any action has been taken by Government under sections 16, 17 and 18 of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, to secure an improvement in the arrangements for removal of refuse from the streets of Calcutta?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of deputing an officer under section 16 of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923—

(*i*) to inspect the arrangements of the Corporation for removal of refuse and for daily cleansing and scavenging of the streets; and

(*ii*) to make recommendations to Government for the improvement of these arrangements?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Not up to date; but specific suggestions have been made to the Corporation for abating the nuisance arising from dustbins in the immediate vicinity of hotels and eating houses, principal markets and stations and hospitals, and the Corporation have been requested to resume the afternoon clearance of these dustbins and have been assured that they will be permitted to obtain such additional petrol as may be found to be required for this purpose.

(*c*) I am considering the desirability of this step.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what specific suggestions have been made to the Corporation for abating the nuisance arising from dustbins?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: To make arrangements to prevent refuse from hotels and other catering establishments lying in the dutbins and on the pavements for many hours before being removed by the conservancy lorries; and to state how much of petrol is necessary for afternoon clearance of the offensive refuse in the dustbins.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Have suggestions been made for cleaning the dustbins?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, Sir.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Have Government suggested that the Corporation should acquire a spare set of dustbins?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: They have not yet been asked specifically.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of making that suggestion?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, I will do that.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to spread his generosity over every part of the city and not over selected areas?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: It will certainly be considered by Government.

Extension of the operation of the Calcutta Improvement Trust to Howrah.

*7. **Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department aware—

(*i*) that at a Conference held in September, 1939, an agreement was reached between the Howrah Municipality, the Calcutta Improvement Trust and Government that the operations of the Calcutta Improvement Trust should be extended to Howrah by legislation; and

(*ii*) that in conformity with that agreement the Howrah Municipality have since April, 1940, been collecting a special rate of 2½ per cent. from the ratepayers of the municipality to meet the expenses for the extension of the Improvement Trust?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the delay in introducing the necessary legislation in pursuance of the Agreement?

(*c*) Do the Government intend to introduce the necessary legislation in the Legislature during the current Budget Session?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*)(*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) No such special rate as suggested in this question is being collected. The consolidated rate levied in this municipality, under section 124 of the Calcutta Municipal Act as extended to the Municipality of Howrah was, however, increased by 2½ per cent. with effect from the 1st April, 1940, and while recommending this increase the Chairman and the Secretary of the Municipality only incidentally referred to the necessity that would arise of contributing a sum equivalent to 2 per cent. on the annual value of holdings to the Calcutta Improvement Trust when its operation would be extended to this Municipality.

(*b*) to (*d*) The delay in introducing the necessary legislation has been due to the fact that various matters had to be considered and settled before a Bill for amending the Calcutta Improvement Act could be prepared. A Draft Bill has since been prepared and is now under the consideration of Government. Steps are being taken to expedite the matter as much as possible.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: With reference to the answer given to question (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to inform the House when he intends to introduce the legislation?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: It is under consideration of Government and it will be introduced as soon as possible.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he means by "as soon as possible"? Can we expect the legislation to be published during the current session?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: All that I can say is that it is being expedited and I can assure the honourable member that it will be taken up as soon as possible.

Mr. A. F. STARK: How long Government have been considering this piece of legislation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: This Government resumed power only four or five months ago and in the intervening time——

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, Khan Bahadur, when you have allowed your Parliamentary Secretary to reply to this question it was not desirable for you to intervene. It would be better for you to wait until he has finished.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I raised a point of order on a previous occasion on this question and I had asked you specifically to let us have your decision as to the position of the Parliamentary Secretaries in regard to replies. We would like definitely to know whether Parliamentary Secretaries have been duly authorised to speak on behalf of Government and whether the statements made by them are committed by Government or not; secondly, Sir, whether it is proper and within the rules to permit a Parliamentary Secretary to function as a Minister, as contemplated under the rules, when the Minister concerned is also personally present in the House. These are the two issues on which we want your definite ruling.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: I may add that this is not a matter of academic interest. You, Sir, are aware that on behalf of the Government of Bengal it was seriously contended before the Hon'ble the High Court of Calcutta as also before the Federal Court that answers given by the Ministers may not bind Government. Of course, the High Court and the Federal Court have both turned down that contention by pointing out that according to Rules of Business the Minister in charge has to give

answers relating to his department. Until that rule also includes "Parliamentary Secretaries" whether the Government of Bengal will not repudiate the answer is also to be considered by you, Sir.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, when you are considering this problem, I will respectfully request you, Sir, to consider what do a Parliamentary Secretary and his institution in the constitution and the law of the country imply——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is a prostitution.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, my friend knows more about these things than I do. He may be an expert and authority on that aspect of the matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, I can teach an old bachelor.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I have raised a constitutional point because it is within parliamentary practice that if the Minister so desires, he can hand it over to his Parliamentary Secretary, the High Court, the Federal Court or the Privy Council notwithstanding.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a very important point for consideration. I will consider it and I think the rules require amendment, but before that is done I think it will be desirable that I discuss this matter with the Minister in charge of Home Affairs and with the Leaders of the parties because I myself have to devote a little time to this aspect of the question and I think, after we have arrived at a decision, it may be necessary to amend the rules and that will be done in due course.

Bengal Pure Food Bill, 1940.

*8. **Mr. I. A. CLARK:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the Bengal Pure Food Bill, 1940, was referred to a Select Committee of the Assembly on the 7th April, 1941, with instructions to report by the 31st July, 1941; and

(*ii*) that the date for submission of the report of the Select Committee was extended to 31st July, 1942?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) why the report of the Select Committee has not yet been submitted to the Assembly; and

(*ii*) when the report of the Select Committee is expected to be submitted to the Assembly?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) The Select Committee could not finish its deliberations on the provisions of the Bill.

(*ii*) By the 31st December, 1943.

Appointment of a Muslim Medical Officer (School Hygiene).

*9. **Maulvi ABDUL KARIM:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that one of the posts of School Medical Officer (School Hygiene) meant for Muslim has been vacant for the last 8 months?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) As no suitable Muslim candidate was available, the post remained vacant for some time. It has since been filled up by a Muslim.

Revival of disturbances in Dacca in June, 1943.

*10. **Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether Government have made any enquiry into the revival of disturbances in Dacca during the month of June, 1943, leading to several cases of murderous assaults?

(*b*) How many of the persons assaulted during these fresh disturbances are (1) Hindus, (2) Muslims and (3) how many cases have proved fatal?

(*c*) What action has been taken by Government to prevent these outbreaks and to check the disturbances when the first signs were noticed?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date or dates of Pakistan Conferences held at different places in East Bengal during the months of May and June, 1943; and

(*ii*) the date or dates when the outbreak of disturbances took place in East Bengal?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) No.

(*b*) (1) Hindus 18, (2) Muslims 22 and (3) fatal cases 15.

(*c*) Promulgation of order under section 144, Cr.P.C., prohibiting the carrying of *lathis* and weapons and assembly of five or more persons; closing of restaurants and excise shops; imposition of collective fines; posting of armed pickets where necessary; Civic Guards too were on duty in their respective *mahallas*.

(*d*) (*i*) There was no Pakistan Conference in May and June in any of the districts of East Bengal except in Faridpur, where at Gopalganj the Muslim Students League held such a Conference on the 25th May, 1943.

(ii) No disturbance was reported from any district except in Dacca where on the 6th June, 1943, a series of assaults began which fortunately did not result in Communal disturbances.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (a), will the Hon'ble Minister please state, as a result of the enquiry they have held, what has been found to be the cause of the disturbance at Dacca?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The enquiry is not yet complete.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who is holding this enquiry, who are the members and whether it is a departmental enquiry or an open enquiry where evidence is collected or attempted to be collected from non-official sources as well?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Departmental enquiry.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Inspector-General of Police went to Dacca on receipt of information of disturbance and held personal enquiries there?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If the visit of the Inspector-General of Police is considered by the honourable member to be an enquiry, I do not contradict him, but he went there chiefly with the object of ascertaining the exact situation there and trying to stop assaults and stabbings that were going on in Dacca at the time.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the Inspector-General of Police invited some citizens of Dacca including myself and made enquiries as to what they thought as to the cause of the disturbance?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have already stated that if the honourable member thinks that it was an enquiry by the Inspector-General of Police, I do not contradict him.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Did the Inspector-General of Police make any report to the Government?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Yes, and on the basis of that further enquiries are being held.

Representation of political prisoners of Dum Dum Central Jail.

*11. **Mr. SATYAPRIYA BANERJEE:** (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that some political prisoners of Dum Dum Central Jail made a representation on the 12th March, 1942, through the Hon'ble Minister to the Hon'ble Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to be circulated among the members of the Legislature?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, has been taken on the said representation?

(c) If no action has been taken, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the said representation?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he received any appeal from the prisoners of Dum Dum Central Jail on the 25th May, 1942, for publication?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The cases of the 20 signatories to the petition were duly considered by Government and they were released. One of them was subsequently made into a security prisoner.

(*c*) Does not arise.

(*d*) I am not prepared to do this in the public interest.

(*e*) Such an appeal was received by the then Minister in charge of the Home Department.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to let us have a summary of the contents of the said representation if it is not possible to give the whole of it in public interest?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: These things were dealt with during the regime of the last Government and in view of the fact that the signatories have been released, I have not taken the trouble to look into the petition that was there and I do not think that, in view of my reply to (*b*), any useful purpose will be served by going through that representation.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has considered the desirability of publishing the appeal?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I refer the honourable member to my answer to (*d*).

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please consider the desirability of publishing this statement?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have already stated in answer to (*d*) that it is not in the public interest and as far as I know that was the decision of the last Government to which I agree.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that this appeal contained an exhortation to the people of Bengal to put up resistance to the Axis powers, particularly to resist Japanese aggression?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have nothing further to add to what I have stated in answer to (*d*).

Construction of A.R.P. shelters in Calcutta.

***12. Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Home (Defence) Department be pleased to state the total number of surface shelters constructed in Calcutta, and the number erected in each A.R.P. sub-area?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is in the contemplation of the Government to increase the number of surface shelters?

(*c*) If so (1) to what extent, and (2) when is it expected that the additional shelters will be completed?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table. Information is given according to wards as the number according to A.R.P. sub-areas is not available and I do not consider the expenditure of time and labour that would be involved on its collection would be justified.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) (1) This will depend on the number found to be necessary and the availability of materials.

(2) As early as possible.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 12.

PARABOLIC BRICK SHELTERS PROVIDED IN CALCUTTA UP TO 31ST MAY, 1943.

Ward No.	Number of shelters provided (parabolic).	Circular shelters without roof.
1	12	3
2	8	..
3	11	6
4	7	..
5	5	..
6	3	..
7	14	..
8	14	..
9	59	..
10	7	..
11	18	..
12	Nil	..
13	8	..
14	4	..
15	11	..
16	Nil	..
17	Nil	..
18	7	..
19	81	..
20	29	..
21	25	..
22	7	..
23	15	..
24	3	..
25	57	..
26	57	..
27	33	..
28	9	..
29	16	15
30	30	15
31	34	14
32	39	9
Total ..	623	62

LIBRARY OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATURE

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that most of these shelters have become useless from the sanitary point of view?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Government are fully aware of the present state of the slit trenches and also some of the covered shelters and instructions have already been given to have them ready and in working order before the raiding season begins.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of covering all these shelters which have been constructed in Calcutta so that they may be used at the time of need?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That question has been very carefully considered and the idea rejected as being not feasible and practicable.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: With reference to answer (*c*)(1), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to assure the House that necessary steps are being taken to ensure that materials required are available?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That is just the difficulty. I am afraid, there are so many priorities on the materials that even the priority of the air raid shelters has to take its turn along with others.

Want of A.R.P. shelters in rented houses of Calcutta.

*13. **Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware that most of the rented houses in Calcutta are not provided with shelters and baffle walls?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken to make the proprietors of the houses to construct proper shelters and baffle walls in each house in Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) Though Government have no accurate information there is no reason to disbelieve the statement that many rented houses in Calcutta are without baffle walls and shelters.

(*b*) Propaganda on a very extensive scale has been undertaken by Government to bring home to the occupiers of the houses the necessity for providing themselves with adequate shelter in the shape of refuge rooms.

Organisation of "Home Guards" in rural areas of Bengal.

*14. **Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state what is the present position of the proposal for organising "Home Guards" in Bengal, specially for the rural areas?

(*b*) Was any scheme for Home Guards drawn up after consultation with certain leaders of public opinion, including the President of the Indian National Congress?

(c) Was any scheme finally prepared and approved by the Council of Ministers, Bengal?

(d) If the answers to (b) and (c) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy each of the said schemes?

(e) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the reasons for the delay in or postponement of the organisation of Home Guards in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (a) I refer the honourable member to—

(i) a statement issued to the Press on the 29th April, 1942, by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq;

(ii) speech by him in this House at the commencement of the last session which will be found at pages 42-43 of the Assembly Proceedings, Volume LXIII, No. I; and

(iii) a statement of progress published in the Press; a copy of *Bengal Weekly* containing this, dated the 15th February, 1943, is laid on the Library Table.

(b) to (d) I am informed that Leaders of some political parties including the President of the Congress were consulted during the early part of last year and a scheme was drawn up thereafter which is still under consideration of Government.

I think this might be correct when the reply was given by the then Minister. As far as we are concerned the scheme is not under consideration.

(e) In view of the answers given, does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (c) which is comprehensively taken under (b) to (d) in the reply, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that some scheme with the approval of leaders of public opinion was actually approved and approved by the then Cabinet?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as the decisions of the then Cabinet are concerned, I have not had time to see them, but very likely the assumption is correct.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in what respects the present arrangements for the organisation of Home Guards for rural Bengal differ from the recommendations that the leaders of public opinion made and which were considered at that time by the then Government, and whether the present Government is in a position to revive or re-model the Home Guard organisation on those lines?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as I am aware, actual orders and definite instructions were never given about the scheme which was approved perhaps by the Council of Ministers and which was never given effect to by the last Government. It never came into effect. Now we are considering in what line reorganisation should be effected.

Dr. NALIN BHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that Mr. Buchanan, Director of Physical Education, was actually placed in charge of the organisation of Home Guards for rural Bengal and a number of officers under him were actually selected and given training for undertaking the work in different districts?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That may have been one aspect of the scheme or part of the scheme, but I am not fully aware of it. I want notice as to the exact functions that were allotted to Mr. Buchanan, but I can assure the honourable member that the scheme as contemplated by the then Government was never given effect to.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the present Government is considering the desirability of putting into action, as early as possible, a scheme which would be readily acceptable to all sections of the people in Bengal, particularly in view of the present emergency and the desire or the intention of the United Powers to fight the Japanese on Burma at a very early date?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As soon as we have come to a decision on this question, I hope we will be able to answer that question.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: With reference to answer (*b*) to (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the scheme referred to in the answer was the scheme that was prepared by the old Government?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I could not follow the honourable member. Will he kindly repeat the question?

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: In the answer (*b*) to (*d*) there is a reference to a scheme. My question is whether that scheme was prepared by the old Ministry or by the present Ministry?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The scheme referred to in the answer relates to the one prepared by the old Ministry.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Are we to understand that that scheme is still under the consideration of Government?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No, Sir. As I have already said that scheme is not under consideration.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly assure the House that the ban on the Muslim League members (as the word has been used) imposed by the old Ministry has been removed?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think it was removed even by the old Government. Of course I am speaking unofficially now.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় অনুগ্রহ করিয়া বলিবেন এই schemeটী কি ?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have already stated that the scheme is under consideration and it is not possible to give any information about that.

Despatch and delivery of letters of security prisoners.

***15. Babu JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(1) whether the security prisoners of Dacca Central and other Jails have complained from time to time to the Government and to the respective Jail Authorities and the District Magistrates about the unusual delays made in the delivery and despatch of letters to and from them;

(2) whether—

(*i*) a letter, dated the 17th February, 1942, from the questioner was received by the Hon'ble Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee on the 16th March, 1942,

(*ii*) a letter, dated the 16th September, 1942, from the questioner was received by the Hon'ble Mr. S. K. Basu on the 3rd October, 1942,

(*iii*) an application for leave of absence from the questioner, dated the 16th September, 1942, was received in the Hon'ble Speaker's office on the 3rd October, 1942, after the Assembly was adjourned *sine die*,

(*iv*) a letter, dated the 14th September, 1942, from security prisoner Babu Pravash Chandra Lahiri, was received by the Hon'ble Mr. S. K. Basu in November last, and

(*v*) similar delays were made and are being made in the case of—

(A) other letters from the questioner and other security prisoners to the Hon'ble Minister, and

(B) notices of questions and other correspondence addressed to the Hon'ble Speaker from the questioner and other M.L.A. security prisoners?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reasons thereof; and

(*ii*) what action he has taken or contemplates to take in order to prevent the recurrence of similar delays?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) (1) and (2) (*i*) to (*iii*) Yes.

(*iv*) I have no information about this letter.

(*v*) and (*b*) (*i*) I cannot give a definite answer unless specific instances are cited. But I may inform the honourable member that special care is always taken to deal with these communications with the utmost expedition. Notwithstanding the above precaution, delays often occur because of heavy pressure of work in my office.

(*ii*) I have given special instructions to all concerned to treat these matters in such a way that there will be no occasion for complaints on this score in future.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY : মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় অনুগ্রহ করে ব'লবেন কি যে অবস্থার এখনও কোন উন্নতি হয় নাই। কলিকাতা প্রেসিডেন্সী জেল হইতে কলিকাতা চিঠি বিলী হইতে এখনও প্রায় ১০।১২ দিন লাগে।

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am glad to have an opportunity to be more explicit about this. This is one of the outstanding grievances of the security prisoners and we have appointed additional staff and they have been trying to clear up the arrears of correspondence that have been pending and today I have ascertained from the I.B. Department that they have now reduced it to four days' delay and they hope to improve on that. There are some cases——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That refers to M.L.As.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No, to every one.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is all humbug. My sister has received from her son a letter which took 17 days.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let him say what he has got to say. Please don't interrupt him.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If the honourable member will give me the particulars, I will certainly have them looked into. I think that complaints from prisoners have been very much reduced on that score. From that I gather that we have been successful in removing the complaints. But if they still continue and if they are brought to my notice, I will certainly see that they are removed. I may mention—and the delay referred to may be due to that—there are certain classes of letters whose number is very small where information has to be collected. It is there that delays occur. Excepting those classes, as regards the rest where no enquiry has to be made by the I.B. Department, the delay has been reduced to 4 days.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that in certain cases letters addressed to the Ministers of the old Ministry—I am accepting that expression—used to reach them three or four months after they were addressed to them by the security prisoners with a note by the Home Department that "the matter is receiving attention"?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have already stated that that was the condition which was very bad. I myself, when I was not a Minister, received a letter from a security prisoner two months old. I am hoping by now we have reached a stage when letters are delayed only by 4 days except in certain particular cases.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make enquiries and find out whether in more than dozen cases—may be two or three dozen cases—attention of the Home Department was not drawn by some of the Ministers to the enormous delay that had taken place?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That may be so, but the remedy lay in having more staff appointed. It has been done now and they have been able to cope with the arrears of letters received.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: Is it not a fact that even after censoring there occurs a delay of 7 days?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I will have it enquired into.

Issue of certificates against society members of Kurigram Co-operative Central Bank.

*16. **Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state the number of certificates issued against the Society members affiliated to the Kurigram Co-operative Central Bank in the year—

(1) 1942, and

(2) 1943?

(*b*) Is it a fact—

(*i*) that realisation is being made by certificate procedure; and

(*ii*) that acute distress prevails in the subdivision?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, do the Government contemplate to stop the realisation by certificates during the present distress?

Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Jogendra Nath Mandal): (*a*) (1) 211.

(2) Up to the 27th June, 1943—640.

(*b*) (*i*) Yes, the realisation is being made by certificate procedure only in the case of persistent and wilful defaulters.

(*ii*) Yes, to a certain extent.

(*c*) In individual cases the execution is being stayed and time allowed for payment.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Formation of Muslim League Committees.

1. **Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether any secret or confidential note has been issued by the Hon'ble Minister or the Secretaries of the

departments to the officials of every district to form or to help the formation of Muslim League Committees in every union of the Province before the 30th July, 1943?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No such note has been issued by me, or by any Secretariat office or departments of which I am in charge.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: The Hon'ble Minister says that no such note has been issued by him or any department of which he is in charge. As Chief Minister, is he aware whether any such note has been issued by any department?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I am sorry I have been caught napping. I intended to correct the answer. The reply should have been "No such note has been issued by me or by any Secretariat office or department of Government".

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Has any such note emanated from any department of Government?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question has been answered.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that notes have been circulated over the signature of one who is a member of the Cabinet of Ministers now?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Not in his capacity as Minister, nor to any individual officer of Government.

Re-arrest of certain detenus under Regulation III of 1818 after release.

2. **Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether Government are aware that Sreejut Sibnath Banerjee and eight others who had been detained in jail under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules were ordered by the Hon'ble High Court to be set at liberty on the 3rd June, 1943;

(*ii*) what action has been taken to give effect to the orders of the High Court in each case; and

(*iii*) whether it is a fact that all those persons have been kept under detention under Regulation III of 1818 thereafter?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) who issued this order under Regulation III of 1818 and on whose authority; and

(*ii*) what are the rules for the guidance of and provision of amenities to the detenus under Regulation III of 1818?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the present Government have modified such rules or issued any fresh rules for the same?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in what respects such rules are similar to or different from the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules, 1940?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) (*i*) Yes, on the ground that orders for their detention under Defence Rule 26 were invalid.

(*ii*) Their detention under Defence Rule 26 terminated upon the pronouncement of the High Court judgment and there was no attempt to continue it.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) The order was issued by and on the authority of Government.

(*ii*) and (*c*) A copy of the Bengal State Prisoners Rules, 1943, is placed in the Library.

(*d*) I refer the honourable member to the rules themselves, copies of which in each case have been made available.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to answer (*b*), that the order was issued by and on the authority of Government, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the authority of Government was obtained in a regular way with the knowledge and approval previously of the Hon'ble Minister in charge?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have nothing further to add.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the Hon'ble Minister in charge was then not in Calcutta, nor was the head of the executive of the province and the order was issued on the authority of somebody who assumed power under the executive rule of the Secretariat?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have nothing further to add.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that Regulation III of 1818 prisoners were to be given amenities in accordance with rules other than the Security Prisoners Rules of 1940?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: There is nothing specific about it. But if the honourable member was to compare the two rules he will find there are certain differences in the treatment of the two classes of prisoners.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where one can get hold of the rules regarding Regulation III of 1818 prisoners' treatment?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I refer the honourable member to answer (*ii*)(*c*) where it is said that a copy of the Bengal State Prisoners Rules, 1943, is placed in the Library.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is not there.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you sure that it is not there?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is not there. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that immediately after the re-arrest of these prisoners in the premises of the High Court peremptory orders were issued by the Home Department of which the Hon'ble Minister is in charge directing that these prisoners although they were detained under Regulation III of 1818 should be governed in regard to their amenities under Security Prisoners Rules of 1940 and no other rules?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I believe the honourable member is not correct.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which portion is not correct—immediately or some time after? Is it a fact that they are being governed under Security Prisoners Rules of 1940 or not?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as I am aware there are different rules for State Prisoners under Regulation III of 1818.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that instructions were issued to the respective Jail Superintendents by telegram and confirmed by letters thereafter directing them to continue to apply the rules regarding Security Prisoners (1940) for this class of prisoners as well?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the advisability of the application of Regulation III of 1818 to men who could not under wide stretches that could be given to that Regulation come under it?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am sorry I have not been able to follow the question. Will the honourable member please repeat it?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I hold that Regulation III of 1818 is not intended for gentlemen of the type whom the Government have clapped in jails. Because the High Court released them the Government brought the anti-diluvion law and deprived the citizens and members of this House even of their right of appeal. My question is—Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the advisability of consulting legal opinion as to the inapplicability of Regulation III of 1818 to gentlemen who are arrested under rule 26 or under the amended rules under the Defence of India Rules?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I submit that the major portion of honourable member's question is a matter of opinion. As regards facts there were people who were detained as long ago as 1937-38 under Regulation III and who were released by the then new Ministry under the Reformed Constitution and as far as I am aware there is nothing illegal in detention under Regulation III of 1818.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*d*) regarding the rules under which security prisoners and Regulation III prisoners are detained, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that Regulation III prisoners had been in the past in the habit of getting suitable allowance to maintain themselves exactly in the same standard of comfort and living as they were used to outside the jails and if it is a fact that the present Government have applied other rules restraining or reducing the amenities previously provided for Regulation III prisoners?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, it is possible that the rules as in force at the present time are not identical with the rules then in force. But I may cite one instance. Persons detained under Regulation III of 1818 who had not been allowed any family allowance when under detention under the Defence of India Rules are now being given family allowance because they are now detained under Regulation III.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Can a gentleman who has been arrested and who has lost his freedom under Regulation III of 1818 be lodged in the ordinary jails of the province?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Not only can he be lodged in ordinary jails but, as far as I am aware, he had always been so lodged.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose who was formerly a Regulation III prisoner was not only provided with ample allowance to maintain himself but was also given an allowance for paying his insurance premiums as also a family allowance?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think the honourable member is correct.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In that case will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to say what he meant by suggesting that formerly Regulation III prisoners were not getting family allowance whereas——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of argument, Dr. Sanyal.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I did not mean that. What I meant was that these persons who came under rule 26 were not getting any family allowance but when they came under Regulation III of 1818 they got family allowance which they would not have got, had they remained under rule 26.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which of them have been given family allowance?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the amount of the family allowance they are getting now?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHAYA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that none of the Regulation III prisoners in the Alipore Central Jail has been getting any family allowance?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that there is a member in this House at the present moment who was at that time a Regulation III prisoner who says that he never got any family allowance?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That question does not arise.

Allegations against a Rajshahi District Board Employee.

3. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the District Officer, Rajshahi, wrote to the Chairman, Rajshahi District Board, to take steps against a District Board employee on the ground that the said employee had incited cultivators against Hindu *jotedars*?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Government be pleased to state—

(*i*) the source of information of the District Officer; and

(*ii*) whether Government propose to make or made any enquiry in the matter?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) The District Magistrate requested the Chairman to take such action as he thought necessary to stop the employee from provoking agrarian trouble.

(*b*) (*i*) I am not prepared to disclose the source of the information about the activities of the District Board employee.

(*ii*) No.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*b*)(*i*), whether it is a fact that the information received by the District Magistrate of Rajshahi was not based on facts?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I regret I cannot add anything more to what I have already stated therein.

Inconvenience of prisoners due to certain jails being under police control on the 15th January, 1943.

4. Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*a*) that on the 15th January, 1943, Presidency, Alipore, Dum Dum and other jails were in charge of the police; and

(*b*) that the security prisoners in Presidency Jail were unlocked at 10-30 a.m. till which time they were without tea and breakfast and even had no water to wash their faces and had to spend their time in their foul-smelling rooms where most of them were compelled to ease themselves, as they could not go to the privy?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) On that day there was a strike by Warders' Staff and the assistance of police had been requisitioned for guard and security duties.

(*b*) My information is that on account of the strike the prisoners had to be unlocked ward by ward on that day and not simultaneously as is done usually with the result that some prisoners were unlocked much later than the usual time.

Promotion of a jail clerk of Alipore Central Jail.

5. Mr. MANIRUDDIN AKHAND: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether any jail clerk of Alipore Central Jail has been promoted to the rank of Deputy Jailor in supersession of the claims of Muslim clerks?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the educational qualification of the promoted clerk?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table copies of the correspondence of supersession between the Inspector-General of Prisons, Bengal, and the Superintendent of the Alipore Central Jail?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) No.

(*b*) to (*d*) Do not arise.

Appointment of supervisor in connection with Munshiganj Water Works.

6. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) when the last supervisor under Executive Engineer, Public Health Department, Eastern Division, was appointed in connection with Munshiganj Water Works in Dacca district;

(*b*) how long he stayed at Munshiganj;

(*c*) what work he had to do there during the period;

(*d*) what is the estimated cost of the work he had to do; and

(*e*) what pay he was drawing there?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: (*a*) In March, 1942.

(*b*) From March to November, 1942.

(*c*) The following works were actually performed by him:—

(1) Construction of the suction pump at the head works site.

(2) Certain survey works in connection with the scheme.

(3) Taking of gauge reading of the water level of the Jubilee Khal and Grand Khal.

(*d*) Estimated value of the work referred to in item (1) is Rs.1,100. Items (2) and (3) are works for preliminary arrangements necessary before starting construction works on the scheme. The value of these items is not assessable.

(*e*) Rs.125 per month.

Staff under Rural Reconstruction and Jute Regulation Department.

7. **Mr. PUSPAJIT BARMA:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, year by year, from 1938 to 1942—

(1) Primary Licensing Assistant,

(2) Clerks, and

(3) other superior appointments made in the—

(1) Jute Regulation, and

(2) Rural Reconstruction

Departments in the district of—

(1) Rangpur,

(2) Dinajpur, and

(3) Jalpaiguri,

from the

(1) Scheduled Caste Hindus,

(2) Caste Hindus and other communities, and

(3) Muslims?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: As the first operation of the compulsory jute regulation was started only from September, 1939, and as no field staff was appointed in connection with the voluntary Jute Restriction propaganda carried on earlier to that, statements showing the nhmber of staff employed from 1939 to 1942 in Rangpur, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri districts from the various communities in connection with the jute regulation and rural reconstruction works are laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to unstarred question No. 7.

I. STATEMENT SHOWING THE COMMUNAL RATIO OF THE SUPERIOR STAFF OF THE JUTE REGULATION DEPARTMENT DURING 1939-40, IN THE DISTRICTS OF RANGPUR, DINAJPORE AND JALPAIGURI.

Name of district	Inspectorates.				Clerical assistants.				Primary recorder.				Area Copyists and Checkers.				Area Section Officers.				Special Surveyors.			
	M.	C. H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.
Rangpur ..	23	19	8	50	4	4	3	11	152	111	37	300	15	10	2	27	1		.	1	5	..	..	5
Dinajpore .	16	11	4	31	5	3	1	9	84	58	17	159	3	4	2	9	1			1	1	1	..	2
Jalpaiguri ..	12	6	3	21	4	.	1	5	50	32	13	95	3	1	1	5	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..
Total ..	51	36	15	102	13	7	5	25	286	201	67	554	21	15	5	41	4	..	..	4	6	1	..	7

II. STATEMENT SHOWING THE COMMUNAL RATIO OF ALL THE STAFF EMPLOYED DURING 1940-41.

Name of District.	Inspectorates.				Clerks in Assistant Controller's office.				Clerks in Chief Inspector's office.				Primary Licensing Assistants and Camp Assistants.				Remarks.
	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	
Rangpur ..	35	23	2	60	..	..	..	..	8	6	2	16	204	150	51	405	
Dinajpore ..	15	20*	4	39	6	6	1	13	7	4	1	12	110	81	33	224	*Includes 2 Native Christians.
Jalpaiguri ..	6	6	3	15	..	..	..	..	4	1	..	5	32	23	10	65	
Total ..	56	49	9	114	6	6	1	13	19	11	3	33	346	254	94	694	

III. STATEMENT SHOWING THE COMMUNAL RATIO OF ALL THE STAFF EMPLOYED DURING 1941-42.

Name of District.	Inspectorates.				Clerks in Assistant Controller's office.				Clerks in Chief Inspector's Office.				Primary Licensing Assistants and Camp Assistants.				Remarks.
	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	M.	H.	S. C.	Total.	
Rangpur ..	41	24	5	70	..	..	..	..	8	6	2	16	204	150	51	405	
Dinajpore ..	17	23*	5	45	10	4	..	14	7	4	1	12	110	81	33	224	*Includes one Native Christian.
Jalpaiguri ..	5	7*	4	16	..	..	..	..	4	1	..	5	32	23	10	65	
Total ..	63	54	14	131	10	4	..	14	19	11	3	33	346	254	94	694	

Information regarding Debt Settlement Boards in Chandpur.

8. Maulvi JONAB ALI MAJUMDER: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the terms of office of the members of the Debt Settlement Boards in the subdivision of Chandpur (Tippera) have expired;

(*ii*) whether the works of those Boards have been suspended;

(*iii*) whether the Boards have not yet been reconstituted; and

(*iv*) whether the old Chairman of the Kalocho Debt Settlement Board within the Hajiganj circle has been asked to hand over the charge of the Board to the newly appointed Chairman in pursuance of a notification in the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated the 4th February, 1943, announcing its reconstitution?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*iv*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*c*) Do the Government consider the desirability of reconstituting the Debt Settlement Boards of the Hajiganj police-station without further delay?

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: (*a*)(*i*) The term of office of members of some of the Boards expired.

(*ii*) No, excepting a few where changes have been proposed.

(*iii*) Some of these Boards have been reconstituted.

(*iv*) Yes.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) This is already being done.

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions over.

Adjournment motion.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Sir, I have given notice of an adjournment motion and I have got your consent. The adjournment motion is in these terms:—

The business of the Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, viz., the failure of the Bengal Government to set at liberty persons purported to have been detained under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules in spite of the decision of the Calcutta High Court and the recent decision of the Federal Court of India declaring the procedure adopted by the Bengal Government regarding detention as contrary to law and improper.

May I have the leave of the House to move the adjournment motion? I hope in an important matter like this the Hon'ble the Home Minister has no objection.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am afraid I must object to the motion being moved on two grounds in order to maintain past

precedents and also the tradition of this House. First of all, this question is, in my opinion, *sub judice*, because we are filing an appeal. Of course, it has not yet been filed but it is a fact that papers are being prepared, and it is only because the appeal has got to be filed in England that it has not been filed yet. I believe there are rulings in the Central Legislature that if it is reasonably assured that there is going to be an appeal the case should be considered as *sub judice*. That is one ground, and the other ground is——

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I do not desire to interrupt the Hon'ble Minister at this stage but I must ask him whether the intention of filing an appeal is really filing an appeal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Banerjee, let the Hon'ble Minister finish his argument first.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The other ground is that it is clear from the rules regarding adjournment motions that if the matter is going to be discussed and can be discussed in the House in the near future, then it should not be discussed by means of an adjournment motion——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Under which rule?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The rules relating to adjournment motions.

As honourable members will have an opportunity to discuss this question at the time of Budget discusion I submit that the adjournment motion should not be allowed. It has always been the practice in this House that if you can discuss a question at the Budget time, an adjournment motion on that question should be allowed only when it would not be possible for members to bring it up before the House in any other way: moreover, it is a *sub judice* case. If the question can be brought before the House by other means then an adjournment motion is not allowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will you give us any precedent of the Central Assembly to which you have referred?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am sorry I have got no precedent with me now but if you like I can give it. But, Sir, I maintain my objection on the ground that this question can be discussed during the Budget discussion——

Mr. SPEAKER: But that is another ground.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I have no precedent with me now and I withdraw my argument based on precedent.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my honourable friend the Chief Minister has raised objections to Mr. Gupta's motion primarily on two grounds. First, the question is whether or not the intention on the part of the Government of Bengal to file an appeal to

His Majesty in Council constitutes a matter *sub judice*. On that point I hope, apart from the legal luminaries who adorn the treasury benches of the Government of Bengal, there can be no difference of opinion. Intention to file an appeal is an intention: it is not a fact, and unless an appeal is actually filed before His Majesty in Council——

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order? The Hon'ble Chief Minister has withdrawn it.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: He has not.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: The Chief Minister having withdrawn it may I ask whether the honourable member is relevant?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think you have not heard Sir Nazimuddin. When I asked Sir Nazimuddin to cite the precedent he said that he withdrew that part of the argument, I mean the part with regard to the precendent, but his argument with regard to the matter being *sub judice* remained. That was what I thought and that is why I allowed Mr. Banerjee to speak, but if Sir Nazimuddin withdraws the entire argument, certainly he will have no right to speak. Therefore, it is first of all necessary to clear up the position—whether Sir Nazimuddin has withdrawn the entire argument or he has withdrawn only the precedent part.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have withdrawn only that portion which referred to the Central Assembly.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the precedent part.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Sir, I was arguing the point as to whether or not an intention—an alleged intention of a litigant, be it a public citizen, a corporation or the Government of Bengal constitutes a fact and constitutes a matter *sub judice*, and I say without fear of contradiction, apart from my honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy's great knowledge of law, that there can be no difference of opinion on that point. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister did not withdraw that part of his objection. He withdrew only that part of his objection which referred to precedent. So far as I am aware, in this House the precedents are just the other way about, viz., that unless a matter is actually pending before a tribunal that matter is not regarded as *sub judice*. The second point which my honourable friend the Chief Minister raised is with reference to the rights of the Opposition with regard to motions for adjournment for purposes of debate. Now, Sir, if you will be good enough to go through part VII of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules—you have gone through them so often—I am on section 98. The right to move the adjournment of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance shall be subject to the following restrictions, namely:—

(*i*) not more than one such motion shall be made at the same sitting;

(*ii*) not more than one matter can be discussed on the same motion, and the motion must be restricted to a specific matter of recent occurrence;

(*iii*) the motion must not revive discussion on a matter which has been discussed in the same session;

Sir, since it is the first day of the session my honourable friend the Chief Minister cannot take shelter behind sub-section (*iii*) of section 98.

(*iv*) the motion must not anticipate a matter which has been previously appointed for consideration.

There has been no previous appointment apart from my honourable friend's allegation about a previously appointed intention to file an appeal to His Majesty in Council.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Leave has been taken.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Leave has not been taken. You do not know the procedure for taking leave under either section 109 or 110 of the Civil Procedure Code or under the newly constituted Government of India Act, 1935.

(*iv*) the motion must not anticipate a matter which has been previously appointed for consideration, or with reference to which a notice of motion has been previously given; and——

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am sorry to interrupt on points of fact. Leave has been obtained by the Federal Court.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Suhrawardy's statements of facts are always accurate.

(*v*) the motion must not deal with a matter on which a resolution could not be moved.

A resolution cannot be moved with reference to this particular motion which is now before you and before the Assembly.

I therefore submit with all humility that whether it is a question of your ruling or whether it is a question of the decision which you may be called upon to make, the motion is perfectly in order. May I also refer you, Sir, to the opening section in Part VII—rule 96? It cannot be denied that this is a definite matter of urgent public importance and therefore, Sir, there is no question about objection on that ground, and the objections raised by my honourable friend the Chief Minister are objections which are absolutely untenable, intended only for the purpose of shielding a system of government and for the purpose of scotching a discussion.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, my knowledge of forensic law may be defective but the matter is *sub judice* especially when leave has been granted, and it is a fact that leave was granted by the Federal Court, and therefore from the initial stage right up to the final decision the matter is to be taken as *sub judice*. I may be, as I have said, not *au courant* with the sections and so on and so forth but the jurisprudence behind the theory of *sub judice* is common knowledge.

Dr. NALINAKSHNA SANYAL: Jurisprudence of Aligarh!

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Jurisprudence of Aligarh is the best in India. Sir, out of 12 candidates 11 passed first class and 1 second class—record in India.

The second point to which I should like to draw your attention is——

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Is my friend Mr. Siddiqi the thirteenth one?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, this is the relevance that you notice in their arguments. Sir, it is no use trying to explain to them because they are determined not to accept.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want your advice.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I cannot advise you. My humble submission to you is not to be taken away by an argument which is not entirely disinterested.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, I will give only one fact. The Government of Bengal obtained leave from the High Court to appeal against the decision regarding Ordinance 19 of 1943 and I think the Member in charge of the Judicial Department will clearly tell you that though that permission has been obtained the Government of Bengal has not filed any appeal before the Federal Court. I am making this statement that on Ordinance XIX of 1943 judgment was delivered by the Hon'ble Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Mitter and Mr. Justice Khundkar and then the Chief Justice granted permission to the Government of Bengal for filing an appeal and we know that they were talking about filing an appeal. They even drew up grounds of appeal but ultimately they have not filed any appeal. That being so, that fact alone will explain that obtaining leave——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not quite relevant to the point.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Yes, Sir, it is relevant in this way that mere taking leave does not amount to filing an appeal, and does not make a matter *sub judice*.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. I would like to hear Mr. Suhrawardy. Will he kindly enlighten me?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, my view, if I may say so, is this. *Sub judice* does not necessarily mean that the matter is being agitated in a court of law. If you are satisfied that a case will surely be filed, if you are satisfied about our *bona fides* that we shall file the case it becomes *sub judice*. Our point of view is that inasmuch as we do intend filing an appeal, it would be entirely wrong on the part of Government to take steps in respect of a decision which is being contested,—steps which might become irrevocable—steps which we cannot retrace should the appeal be decided in our favour. In the meantime, the first application has already been made in respect of the decision against which we are

appealing. The whole thing is a question of intention. If you are satisfied that we do intend filing an appeal and that we have taken all the steps necessary, then the case is *sub judice*. There is still time to file an appeal.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: May I just draw your attention in this connection to one fact?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Basu, will you kindly resume your seat for one moment? Mr. Suhrawardy, do I understand you to suggest that when there are indications from Government to the effect that they intend to file an appeal, that in itself will make a motion for adjournment inadmissible? Do you mean to say that? What is the ordinary meaning of the term "*sub judice*"? If you say this that when a Court is in seizin of a matter, it is certainly *sub judice*. There is no doubt about that. But when no Court is in seizin of a matter, can it be said that the matter is *sub judice*? If I accept your argument, it comes to this that when there is any intention on the part of a party to move the higher Court, we have got to assume that the matter is *sub judice*. The question is whether it will make any difference between the intention of Government and the intention of an individual who is not Government. Therefore if such a matter comes up before this House, any honourable member can rise and say: "Well, though no Court is in seizin of a particular matter but the person interested intends to file an appeal" and the Speaker is satisfied. Then discussion on that subject will be stopped.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: What I beg to submit is this. Here one Court has done as much as it possibly could, namely, that it gave us leave to file an appeal. The question is that of intention and that intention, whether it is of Government or of a person, makes no difference. You must be satisfied whether an appeal is going to be filed or not. If you are satisfied with regard to this, you should consider it *sub judice* for the purposes of an adjournment motion. I have a vague recollection that either in this House or in the Council the President disallowed such a motion for adjournment in a case when Government stated that the matter was under investigation. It had not been taken seizin of by the Court but Government intended to file a case and bring it before the Court.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, the proposition enunciated by Mr. Suhrawardy is extremely dangerous from the point of view of the rights and privileges of this House. There is no limitation of time for filing an appeal before the Privy Council, particularly in criminal cases. They rely on the mere fact that they have obtained leave to appeal. Once that is sought to be put forward as an argument that the matter is *sub judice*, then by obtaining that leave and never filing an appeal they can for ever prevent this House from discussing the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one more point about which I want to be sure. With regard to the first point of Sir Nazimuddin, namely, that according to the convention—he has not used the word "convention"; he

has said "tradition"—of this House, when a matter can be discussed during this session in connection with any other matter, no adjournment motion should be allowed. So far as I am concerned, I am not aware of anything like that. Is there any precedent in this House?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I actually heard about this adjournment motion at about twenty minutes to four and as far as I am informed my office got notice of it at about 3-30 p.m. So I have not been able to come prepared. As far as my recollection goes, I am fairly certain about the matter that Sir Azizul Haque more than once enunciated this principle that when a matter can be discussed by means of a budget cut motion——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Don't talk of budget cut motions this time. We have got to deal with 70 items in five days' time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But why should he repeat that joke, Sir?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think, Sir, that if the rulings of Sir Azizul in budget sessions are looked into, you will find it. If it is not in the rulings, then it is one of the conventions which he had set up.

Then, Sir, I may just say one word about the matter being *sub judice*. I feel that *sub judice* has got no meaning if where there is a possibility of an appeal being filed during the time-limit we discuss a matter and prejudice the Court. Mr. Basu has pointed out that in the Privy Council there is no time-limit but there is practically a convention that it must be done in a short time; otherwise leave to file is not granted. I submit, Sir, that as far as this House is concerned, if this *modus operandi* is accepted that where it is ascertained definitely that leave has been obtained or notice has been given that an appeal will be filed, then during the pendency of the time-limit for an appeal the matter should be treated as *sub judice*. Otherwise, it will have no meaning. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: There is no time-limit in filing an appeal in this case.) I am talking of other cases. As far as the Privy Council cases are concerned, there the convention is that it must be done within a reasonably short term. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You must act immediately according to the order of the Court. You must set the prisoners at liberty.) I am not talking about the question of release. I am talking about our right to discuss the matter so that the Court may not be prejudiced by any decision that may be taken. That is the convention about *sub judice*. That is my point of view and now it is for you to decide.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I have got to give my ruling here and now, because today is the day for the presentation of the budget and we have got to see that the budget is properly gone through. Now the motion deals with a matter of the utmost importance. There can be no denying that and there has been no discussion with regard to that as well. Admittedly, therefore, this is a matter which the House would like to discuss. The

question is whether, in view of the fact that this question may be discussed during the cut motions of the budget, this should be allowed at the present stage or not. This is one point. The other point is whether, on account of this matter being *sub judice*, the motion is or is not in order.

Now I shall begin from the second point. It has been stated that this matter should be considered to be *sub judice*. The reason assigned is that leave has been obtained of the Federal Court to appeal to the Privy Council and that that makes this matter *sub judice*. I regret I cannot accept this view. *Sub judice* means that the matter is subject of adjudication of a competent court and it is *sub judice* only if some court is in seizin of it. In this particular case, leave has been obtained to appeal to the Privy Council but no court is in actual seizin of this matter. Something could have been said in favour of this argument, if this leave had been obtained as a special leave of the Privy Council itself. There it could have been said that the Privy Council is in seizin of it or it has taken notice of the case. But the Privy Council cannot now by any stretch of imagination be said to be in seizin of this matter. It may be that the Government of Bengal intend in all seriousness to file an appeal but there may be many reasons which may induce them subsequently not to prefer an appeal. Take for example things, which I hope will not take place but which are not impossible to take place. Take for instance this: Tomorrow there may be a change of Government. The next Government that will come in may not perhaps take the trouble of filing an appeal. Therefore, with the best of intentions or earnestness on the part of the present Government, it cannot be said that such an appeal will surely be filed by its successor. That is with regard to fact and that is an extreme case which is not likely to take place. But there may be many reasons like this. There may be a change of policy on the part of the Central Government even and, therefore, it may not be necessary to file an appeal. Apart from these speculations, let us now come to the point, namely, whether it may be said by any stretch of imagination that any court, either the Privy Council or any court in British India, is in seizin of this matter. The moment the Federal Court passed its judgment, that court ceased to have seizin of this matter. (Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: The Privy Council is not a Court either.) It is clear that after a judgment is pronounced by a court, that judgment is subject to criticism and it is criticized almost daily by the press. That does not constitute a contempt of court because no court is in seizin of the matter unless an appeal is actually filed. Therefore, I am clearly of opinion that it cannot be said that any court is in seizin of this matter and that the matter is *sub judice*.

Now the next point that arises in this connection for consideration is, though it is not *sub judice*, strictly speaking, whether it is desirable that matters of this description should be allowed to be discussed in the Assembly in the circumstances stated in the present case, namely, where there is a serious desire, a *bona fide* desire and intention on the part of the Government to move in this matter. I, standing here as the custodian of the rights and privileges of this House, will never say that whenever there is a desire,

on the part of the Government to move in this matter, this House should not have the right to discuss it. (Hear, hear.) I will say that this House has got the right to discuss it unless it is barred by a specific rule from discussing it. Therefore, that is my observation with regard to the point of *sub judice*.

Then coming to the other question, namely, convention in this House, I have just consulted the Secretary and he is of opinion that it cannot be said as a matter of convention that discussions of matters like this in a Budget Session have always been overruled. This cannot be said to be so. As I looked into the rules I find that there is a sort of partial bar during the voting on demands and it is perfectly correct that there it is a quesion of principle. When voting is actually going on, the matter can be discussed threadbare by a cut motion. Consequently, it would be a sheer waste of time of the House to allow the matter to be discussed and again brought up during the same session by a cut motion. Therefore, I think that so far as that part of the argument is concerned, it applies to the period covered by voting on demands for grants. In this case, it is not so. Today is the day for the presentation of the budget. Therefore, the rules do not stand in our way.

But I felt another difficulty in my way. I am told by my Office, by the Secretary, that there are precedents to cover that, and that is this. When the budget has got to be gone through, the presentation of the budget must take place today. My idea of an adjournment motion is that it is given priority over all other business, that is to say, every other business of the day is suspended to give preference to that matter. That is the very essence of an adjournment motion. Now judged by that standard it becomes extremely difficult to allow——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am sorry to interrupt you, Sir. I want to submit that it is not our intention to shut out the budget. We can bring this up tomorrow. So far as the Opposition is concerned we shall be prepared to go through the Bill in a much shorter time if the debate is taken up on this issue.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you are often very helpful but sometimes, I must say, you are a sort of an obstructionist. You will excuse me for using this mild expression. While I was giving my ruling, you ought to have some patience.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am sorry, Sir, and I express my regret.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank you for that, and I also withdraw my remark.

Now, I think I was pointing out my difficulty with regard to the presentation of the budget. If there is any convention in this House that this adjournment motion can be taken up on a subsequent date—and I am told that there is such a convention—there would not be much difficulty, but at the same time I should like to remind the House that it was agreed in a conference of all the Whips of the parties and therefore I take it, with the consent of the leaders of all the parties, that the entire business must

be finished within a certain number of days and that the two Bills, namely, the Bengal Vagrancy Bill and the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill must be finished within the two days allotted for them viz., the 15th and the 16th. And now if the House agree that they will see that these two Bills are gone through and finished in course of tomorrow, then and then only this adjournment motion can be taken up on the 16th. If the House agrees to that, I think all these difficulties can be got over; and therefore if I am to allow this motion, I think, I have got to fix the date and the time. Therefore I want to know first of all if the House agrees to the discussion of this matter on the 16th at 4 p.m.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, if we finish the two Bills within tomorrow, there will not be any business for the day after tomorrow, and in that case there cannot be any occasion for adjournment of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: There will be some business left over and that business will be finished in a few minutes after question time, and then we will take up the adjournment motion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I suggest that tomorrow we finish the Vagrancy Bill and we give an undertaking to have it finished in course of half an hour.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, when you are speaking of an undertaking, have you consulted your leader?

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Sir, we can have it on Saturday morning.

Mr. SPEAKER: But we have business also allotted for that day.

Mr. A. F. STARK: At what time we are meeting tomorrow, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: At 4-30 p.m.

Mr. A. F. STARK: That being so, we will have half an hour's time to finish the Vagrancy Bill and the Agricultural Income-tax Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it is settled then that we finish our business, say, at 4 p.m. on the 16th—I mean, the business on the agenda for the 15th and the 16th, and then we will take up the adjournment motion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have consulted the leaders of different parties. It will be convenient for us and for the Government also if tomorrow we finish the Vagrancy Bill and then proceed with the adjournment motion. The Agricultural Income-tax Bill may be taken up and finished the day after tomorrow.

Mr. SPEAKER: The first thing is, you see, I am not quite in order myself. Before I allow it to be discussed I must see if there is any objection to it and then I must take the sense of the House, because otherwise it will be impossible.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I do not understand what Dr. Sanyal exactly means. If tomorrow we take up the Vagrancy Bill and

proceed to discuss the adjournment motion, that means that both of them will have to be finished within half an hour. You said that the House would meet at 4-30 p.m. on that day. Allotting one hour for questions there remains only half an hour for the Vagrancy Bill plus the adjournment motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Mookerjee, it is quarter to six now, and we have got much work to do which must be finished very quickly.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, what I would like to suggest is that in consultation with the Leader of the House you decide whether the adjournment motion should be admitted or not, then you should take the sense of the House whether the motion should be adopted or not and then in consultation with the Leader of the House and the leaders of all the parties you fix the date, either tomorrow or the day after.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I will do that.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I have no objection: the only thing is it is impossible to take up the adjournment motion tomorrow, but we have no objection to the 16th being fixed if the House is in agreement. As you have already made the condition precedent that previous agreements would be observed, we have no objection if the House agrees.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I hold that this motion is in order. Is there any objection? (No objection was raised.) I see there is no objection. It is admitted. With regard to the time and the hour it will be announced tomorrow.

ORDINANCE.

The Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance, 1943.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I beg to lay the Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance, 1943, before the Assembly, under section 88 (2) (*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

BUDGET ESTIMATES, 1943-44.

Statement by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present the budget for the year 1943-44.

Five months of the year to which these estimates relate have already passed: and this is now the third time that the estimates for 1943-44 have been before the House but I hardly think I need, or indeed shall be expected, to remind the House of the circumstances in which more than five months into the financial year Government find themselves without due sanction for the appropriations necessary to carry on the administration of the Province. The events of the July session are too fresh in the minds of the

all for it to be necessary for me to recall how you, Sir, ruled as out of order Government's proposal to move the demands that had not been voted in March last before the fall of the Fazlul Huq Ministry. We have studied your ruling, Sir, and the estimates laid before the House this afternoon have been prepared in the light of the observations contained in that ruling.

I propose to make one reference only to the constitutional aspect of the present proceedings. In the course of your ruling, Sir, you said, "The rules regarding the time for presentation of the budget, etc., could not for obvious reasons be complied with——"

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I venture to suggest that the budget speech be taken as read.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: This is very unfair. It has never been done in the case of the budget speech. I strongly protest.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It is only to save time.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is still time.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: "Section 78 of the Act does not prescribe any time when the annual financial statement is to be presented, though rule 12 of the Governor's Rules does. It is only reasonable to hold that in extraordinary circumstances not covered by the law it should be permissible to place the annual financial statement even after the year has commenced or proceeded further. I do not think there can be any serious objection to such a procedure". These, Sir, are your words.

If I may be allowed to say so, I entirely agree. But, with a view to ensure, as far as possible, that our endeavours to comply with the provisions of the Constitution Act and the Rules made thereunder may not be rendered infructuous on the ground that they contravene rule 12 of the Governor's Rules, the Governor after consultation with you, Sir, has been pleased to make an *ad hoc* Rule to govern the time for the fresh presentation of the estimates for the current financial year.

One word, Sir, about the form of the estimates: honourable members will observe that there has been a change in the form of the budget. In the first place, the customary revised estimates for the preceding year have been replaced by actuals since these actuals are now to hand. In the second place instead of the usual single column headed "budget estimate, 1943-44" or such other year as may be appropriate, the estimates for 1943-44 have been exhibited in three columns: reading from the right, we have first a column in which is shown "Actual expenditure from 1st April 1943 to 24th April 1943": next we have a column showing "Estimated expenditure from 25th April 1943 to 31st March 1944": and finally there is a column in which has been entered the aggregate of the other two columns, representing the estimated expenditure for the whole year.

In deference to the opinion expressed by you, Sir, in your ruling of 7th July, that honourable members were entitled to have at least some indication of the amount of expenditure incurred between 1st and 24th April, the

Accountant-General, Bengal, was requested to compile from his account registers as accurately as possible the expenditure during the section 93 administration. He furnished the figures now placed before the House but in doing so he made it clear that since his accounts are compiled for whole months the figures in question are in many cases based on rough calculations with no pretensions to meticulous accuracy.

I hope, Sir, that the form in which the estimates have now been drawn up and presented will be satisfactory to the House from every point of view.

Before considering the estimates for the current year I shall review very briefly the working of the past year.

According to the Budget estimate the year 1942-43 was to start with an opening balance of a crore and 15 lakhs and to end with a closing balance of 79 lakhs. In actual working the opening balance stood at a crore and 32 lakhs and the closing balance at 2 crores and 61 lakhs. The improvement of a crore and 82 lakhs in the closing balance is made up as follows: an increase of 17 lakhs in the opening balance: an improvement of 82 lakhs in the Revenue section; and an improvement of 82 lakhs outside the Revenue Account. Let me now give a brief account of each of these changes.

The improvement in the opening balance was due mainly to the slowing down of expenditure in the closing months of 1941-42 as a measure of war-time economy following the entry into the war of Japan.

Revenue receipts amounted to 16 crores 50 lakhs against the original estimate of 15 crores and 70 lakhs and thus proved 80 lakhs better than was originally anticipated. The main variations from the original estimates were an increase of 47 lakhs under Income-Tax and 72 lakhs under Excise, offset by a decline of 34 lakhs under Other Taxes and Duties. The increase under Income-Tax was due mainly to the war boom in industries. The improvement under Excise is attributable in the main to the larger consumption of country liquor as a result of the influx into the Province of non-Bengali labourers, factory workers, camp-followers and evacuees addicted to liquor: but our revenues have also benefited considerably in consequence of the greatly diminished supplies of imported liquor in place of which consumers have turned to what is called "foreign liquor" made in India. The decrease under Other Taxes and Duties is due principally to a smaller yield from the Sales Tax than was originally anticipated. Against the Budget provision of one crore, actuals amounted to 69 lakhs only. This was the first year in which the Act was in operation for a full twelve months and in consequence the original estimate was very largely a matter of guess work. The Budget estimate may have been on the high side even for normal conditions, but there can be no doubt that receipts were very largely affected by the reduction of private sales of building materials and of imported consumer's goods.

Under Revenue Expenditure, although the actuals, in total, almost exactly equalled the original estimate, important variations occurred under three main heads. There was an increase of 49 lakhs under Famine Relief and

60 lakhs under Extraordinary Charges, set off by a decrease of 92 lakhs under Civil Works. The increased expenditure under Famine Relief became necessary owing to the devastation caused by the cyclone and tidal wave in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas. The increase under Extraordinary Charges was due partly to the intensification of A.R.P. and Civil Defence activities and partly to special measures designed to meet the exigencies of the war situation. Some of the more important schemes under the second category were the creation of the Directorate of Civil Supplies, the organisation of Home Guards, the grant of separation and other allowances in non-family areas and additional war-time police. The decrease under Civil Works was due partly to the drastic curtailment of work and partly to the delay in the making of an accounting adjustment the effect of which would have been to raise the actuals under this head by over 20 lakhs.

Outside the Revenue Account a surplus of 70 lakhs was anticipated at the Budget stage. In actual working this surplus turned out to be a crore and 51 lakhs. This improvement of 81 lakhs was the result of a loan of 2½ crores from the Government of India, set off by heavier outgoings under special advances and under advances to cultivators. The increase under special advances amounted to 93 lakhs out of which 68 lakhs was for the purchase of food grains and 15 lakhs for the acquisition of motor vehicles for civil defence purposes. Under advances to cultivators the original provision was 15 lakhs only. Actuals however amounted to 94 lakhs, the increase being due to widespread distress of unprecedented severity caused by cyclone and flood.

Sir, I shall now pass to the estimates for the current year, 1943-44.

The opening balance was 2 crores 61 lakhs: the estimates provide for a revenue of 18 crores 44 lakhs and an expenditure on revenue account of 25 crores 80 lakhs. And so in a year in which our revenue is expected to be two crores higher than that of last year, our best year up to date, there will be a deficit on revenue account of 7 crores 36 lakhs!

In Bengal of late we have unfortunately grown accustomed to deficit budgets but a deficit of over 7 crores is something new and something very startling. On the other hand the conditions confronting us today are quite unparalleled. This huge deficit is due entirely to the burden laid on our revenues by measures for the relief of distress in our present misfortunes. In Bengal today there is only one problem that matters: the food problem. Every one who has seen the plight in which Bengal finds herself today will agree that this is no time for half measures and no matter what the cost, Government must afford relief to those unfortunates for whom failure to afford relief may mean death by starvation.

Sir, with this brief declaration of Government's policy, I return to the review of the current year's estimates.

I have said that the deficit on revenue account will be 7 crores 36 lakhs. Experience has taught us that an opening balance of 2 crores 61 lakhs is

none too large and so outside the revenue account we propose to borrow such sums as will provide a surplus in the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget sufficient to counterbalance the deficit on revenue account and leave the opening balance intact as the closing balance for the year.

Now, Sir, let me fill in the details of this broad outline.

As I have already stated, the estimated revenue for the current year is 18 crores 44 lakhs or one crore 94 lakhs better than the actual receipts in 1942-43 which at 16 crores 50 lakhs represents our best year to date. The main items of improvement are 65 lakhs under Excise, 50 lakhs under Stamps and 75 lakhs under Other Taxes and Duties.

The increase under Excise is attributable in part to increased consumption and in part to the enhancement of the rates of duty on liquor, *ganja* and opium undertaken with the twofold purpose of reducing consumption and mopping up surplus purchasing power.

Mr. SPEAKER: We have got to rise punctually at 6 o'clock on account of *Ramzan*. So it is better that we should take the remaining portion of the speech as read.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is not possible, Sir. The Chief Minister made a serious objection to that and we will not permit any portion of the speech which is not actually read out in this House to be regarded as read.

Mr. SPEAKER: I quite see the force of your reason.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It does not matter if the remaining portion is not read out.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will be unfair.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why? The budget is there. If a speech is not delivered that does not matter.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, statements by Ministers have been taken as read and have formed part of the official report of this Assembly.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know that has been done in the past. On this occasion Dr. Sanyal also insisted that that should be done, but the opposition came from the Leader of the House. This is the whole trouble.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: May I explain the stage at which I took exception——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You want to shut down the Minister for Civil Supplies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Let him speak.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I thought it would be against a very valuable convention if we start taking a whole thing as read, because from time immemorial members have listened to budget speeches with great patience. As regards the Food Minister's speech I considered that it would be impossible in 15 minutes' time to read out a statement of this character.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If the Food Minister gives us a printed speech and if it is circulated tomorrow, then we shall be prepared to accept this.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I want to draw your attention to a very serious omission which has taken place. The Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance has not been placed before the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: It has been placed.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Nobody from this side of the House heard it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Basu, I twice drew the attention of the House and it was placed.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Everybody on this side of the House says that it has not been done.

Mr. ABDULLAH-AL MAHMOOD: Because they were unmindful.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot detain the House any longer. It is already past 6 o'clock. I would now ask the Finance Minister to read out the conclusion and the rest will be taken as read.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Do we also take it that the Minister in charge of Civil Supplies will have his speech circulated?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge as to what he has got to say. But let the Finance Minister finish first.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: The bulk of the improvement under Stamps occurs under "Non-Judicial" and is due to an expansion in the volume of transactions, such as transfers of immovable property, involving the use of non-judicial stamps.

Under Court-fees too a slight upward trend is visible after years of almost continuous decline.

Out of the total increase of 75 lakhs under Other Taxes and Duties, some 40 lakhs are due to the enhancement of the rates of levy in respect of Entertainment Tax, Betting Tax and Electricity Duty under the Bengal Finance Act, 1943. The bulk of the remaining increase occurs under Sales Tax and is due mainly to the general rise in the price of commodities and specially of imported consumer's goods.

The estimated revenue expenditure in the current year is 25 crores 81 lakhs against an actual expenditure of 16 crores 73 lakhs in 1942-43. The increase is thus a little over 9 crores.

Out of this, the loss on the sale of subsidised food accounts for 3½ crores. With a view to meet the acute shortage of foodstuffs in this Province Government have been obliged to undertake large scale purchase and distribution of foodgrains. For the exhibition of these trading transactions, a new head "85A—Capital outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War" has been opened this year in the "Capital" Section of the Budget. Government's outlay on food grains will be recorded under this head and the sale-proceeds will be taken in reduction of the outlay booked under the head. If the sale-proceeds are sufficient to cover the cost of our purchases, the net outlay under the head will be nil and no debit to provincial revenues will be involved. Unfortunately the average cost price of certain essential foodstuffs, particularly of rice, has for some time past been far beyond the capacity of the poorer sections of the public and it has been Government's policy to make rice and other foodstuffs available to such persons at concession rates through a chain of "control" shops and special grain shops both in Calcutta and in the mufassal. Government have also sanctioned the opening of departmental shops for the supply to non-gazetted Government servants drawing pay not exceeding Rs.300 of certain foodstuffs at concession rates. It is estimated that the loss involved in these sales will be not less than 3½ crores, 2½ crores on account of sales to the public and 1 crore on account of sales to Government employees. This loss is chargeable to revenue and will be adjusted by debit to "63—Extraordinary charges" with a corresponding deduct entry under the Capital head to balance the original capital outlay.

The next largest increase occurs under Famine Relief: where there is a provision of 3 crores 52 lakhs against last year's actual expenditure of 52 lakhs. Against an average outlay of about 10 lakhs in normal years, the expenditure on relief operations rose last year to 52 lakhs. This was due mainly to the havoc caused by the cyclone and tidal wave in the districts of Midnapore and 24-Parganas. This year there has been a very serious deterioration of the economic condition over the greater part of the Province. Last year's cyclone and this year's floods have a share in the responsibility for the present condition of the Province but the main cause of today's widespread distress is the fantastically high price of rice. The estimated cost of relief operations now stands at 3 crores 52 lakhs of which a crore and 90 lakhs is on account of gratuitous relief and the balance for Test works. In order to minimise the inflationary effect of these relief measures, relief is being given wherever possible in kind.

The next item that calls for comment is an increase of 66 lakhs under Agriculture. This is due mainly to an intensification of the "Grow More Food" campaign which was instituted in the preceding year at a total cost of 21 lakhs. The provision on this account in the current year amounts to close upon 83 lakhs. The more important items on this year's programme are the distribution of 3 lakhs maunds of *aman* paddy seeds, of 50 thousand

maunds of wheat seeds and of 42 thousand maunds of gram, lentil and mustard seeds. The distribution of *aman* paddy seeds has already been completed. Among subsidiary items may be mentioned a scheme for irrigation by means of Persian wheels at a cost of half a lakh; a scheme for the cultivation of fodder crops at a cost of 1½ lakhs; and another scheme costing 2 lakhs designed to stimulate the growth of vegetables. The Government of India have agreed to make an interest-free advance in respect of half the cost of seed distribution. This advance will be credited to the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget and repaid immediately after the recovery of the seed loans.

The expenditure on Civil Works in the current year is expected to be some 55 lakhs higher than the actuals for 1942-43. The increase is due partly to the adjustment during the current year of certain charges relating to 1942-43 and partly to the enhanced price of road and building materials.

There is an increase of 27 lakhs under Police more than half of which is due to the supplementary dearness allowance and the balance to such items as reorganisation of Civic Guards, Emergency Areas Bonus and increased charges for clothing and equipment.

The increase of 11 lakhs in the Irrigation Budget is due mainly to the repair of irrigation embankments damaged by cyclone and flood.

Interest charges are higher by nearly 15 lakhs as a result of heavier borrowing regarding which I shall have more to say when I deal with the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget.

Another item of increased expenditure is a subvention of 5½ lakhs to the Calcutta Corporation, representing a moiety of the War Risks (Factories) Insurance premium and a lump grant of Rs.5 lakhs as recommended by Mr. Gurner to supplement the Corporation's closing balance for 1942-43.

Finally, the expansion and reorganisation of the Department of Civil Supplies accounts for an increase of 31 lakhs. Half of this increase is required to meet the cost of the additional staff first engaged in June last for the purpose of the combined anti-hoarding drive and census of foodstuffs throughout the Province and since retained to supervise the work of the food committees brought into being at that time. The balance is required to meet the additional cost of new or expanded offices under the Directorate amongst which particular mention may be made of the office of the Controller of Wheat and Wheat Products with an officer in Lahore whose task it is not only to expedite the despatch of all consignments intended for Bengal, but also to make such purchases outside the basic plan as opportunity permits; of a special relief organisation and of an Intelligence Section to detect and to supervise the prosecution of offenders against the Directorate's statutory orders.

It has not yet been found possible to work out the full details of the cost of rationing which is going to be introduced shortly. Consequently, no

provision for this item has been included in the present estimates. The cost is however expected to be considerable and a supplementary demand will have to be put in in due course.

Let me now turn to the Capital Section. I have already referred to the new head of account, "85A—Capital Outlay on Provincial Schemes connected with the War" which has been opened in the current year for the exhibition of large scale trading transactions undertaken by Government. The schemes for which provision has been included under this head relate to the purchase and distribution of food grains and standard cloth and the building up of a reserve of salt. The outlay on the Grain Purchase Schemes is estimated at 10 crores of rupees and as already explained the loss involved in the subsidised sale of foodstuffs to the public and to Government employees on small pay is estimated at 3½ crores. This loss will be adjusted by transfer to revenue. The outlay on standard cloth is estimated at 7½ crores and the whole of this amount is expected to be recovered. The salt purchase scheme involves an outlay of 50 lakhs and as the salt is to be held as a reserve against emergencies the expenditure will remian outstanding at the close of the year. The net expenditure under "85A" accordingly stands at 50 lakhs.

I may add that since the foregoing estimates were drawn up, a scheme has been formulated for the purchase of some 65 lakh maunds of the *aus* crop at an estimated cost of 16 crores of rupees. Arrangements to finance these purchases have been completed with the Imperial Bank of India.

I shall now pass to the Debt Deposit Section of the Budget. The surplus under this section in 1942-43 was a crore and a half. The present estimates provide for a surplus of 7 crores. The improvement of 5½ crores is the result of larger borrowing set off to some extent by a larger issue of agricultural loans.

In 1942-43 our net borrowing amounted to 3½ crores of which 2½ crores represented a Ways and Means Advance and 1 crore was an advance in respect of the Provincial share of the poolable Civil Defence expenditure. The present estimates provide for a total borrowing of 18 crores, including general Ways and Means Advances aggregating 9½ crores, a rice purchase loan of 5½ crores, a wheat purchase loan of 1½ crores and a Civil Defence advance of 1 crore. The repayment contemplated amounts to 7½ crores, including 2½ crores on account of last year's Ways and Means Advance and 5 crores on account of rice and wheat purchase loans taken in the current year. The net borrowing therefore amounts to 10½ crores, that is to say, 7 crores more than in 1942-43. On the other hand, owing to the serious deterioration in the economic condition throughout the Province the issue of agricultural loans will be on a very much larger scale in the current year and after taking into account the estimated recoveries there will be a net outgoing of 260 lakhs as against last year's actual net outlay of 70 lakhs.

It will appear from the foregoing analysis that although our revenue is 2 crores higher than last year, it has failed to keep pace with the huge

expenditure forced upon us by the exigencies of the present situation and we are faced in the current year with a revenue deficit of over 7 crores.

Our outstanding debts at the close of the current year are estimated at 14 crores made up as follows:—

		Crores
Advance in respect of the Provincial share of poolable Civil Defence expenditure	...	2
Ways and Means Advance	...	9½
Advance for purchase of food grains	...	2
Advance in connection with "Grow More Food" schemes	...	½
Total	...	14

It remains for me to give some indication of the measures I propose for reducing the startling gap between our expenditure and our revenue. Tomorrow I shall beg leave to introduce and move for reference to a Select Committee a Bill to impose an income-tax on agricultural incomes. I need not make a secret of Government's decision to introduce later in the year a Bill to enhance the sales tax.

No revenue can be expected from an agricultural income-tax till 1944-45 and it may not be possible to pass the legislation necessary to enhance our sales tax in time to afford any relief during the current financial year. And so for the present there is no alternative but to borrow and it is on this assumption that the estimates relating to the Debt Deposit Section of our Budget have been framed.

In my attempt to delineate a true picture of the financial position of the Government of Bengal, I have had to introduce wearisome details. It is a dismal picture that bears little resemblance to those which were presented before the Legislature in past years under less unhappy circumstances. Bengal, once so richly dowered with Nature's bounties, is today bent double with woe and agony and is a suppliant for neighbourly charity. In the situation in which we find ourselves, there is no choice left to Government but to undertake in the very largest measure the task of relieving distress regardless of cost.

Nature and Man seem to have conspired to inflict on the people of this Province almost unbearable sufferings, in the mitigation of which we may have, from time to time, to violate the accepted canons of public finance with a view to the ultimate good. Within the space of less than a year, Bengal has been visited by two major natural calamities, imposing upon our resources a burden the magnitude of which can be at least partially judged by the figures I have given you in regard to our relief operations. It is a commonplace in conversation and journalism today to describe Bengal as a base of military operations. The presence of the large military personnel, the construction of aerodromes, roads and bridges, and the almost unlimited purchases of commodities have inevitably upset the balance of the economic life of the Province and intensified the evil of

Inflation. While it is the determined policy of our Government to adopt remedial measures against inflation, it is only too obvious that many of the remedies which might suggest themselves to you or to me are beyond the Provincial Government's powers.

It must be remembered that Inflation which is set in motion by war conditions and is the creature of a vicious circle, itself creates vicious circles, in the general economy of a country. Abnormal purchasing power created by and for Government is passed on to the people. But it is so unevenly distributed that, among other evils, that of the "black market" is inevitable; for, as a result of inflation, the rich are richer and the poor poorer. We in Bengal have sought the assistance of the Government of India; we have, at great sacrifice, offered them co-operation. I sincerely hope that assistance will be rendered unto us in the spirit of the proverb: "He giveth twice who giveth soon".

A situation like this must naturally give rise to recriminations; recriminations between Government and people, between one Government and another. Not only do I desire to avoid recrimination, I wish that we the people of Bengal—nay, we the people of India—should prayerfully resolve that, however artfully some sovereign Demiurgus in the stars may have cast our parts, each one of us will be steeled by adversity and impelled to unite in a common endeavour to allay suffering, and in so acting to be the architect of a brighter and more glorious destiny for the land of our birth.

APPENDIX.

[Figures are in thousands of rupees.]

	Budget, 1942-43.	Actuals, 1942-43.	Budget, 1943-44.
Receipts—			
Opening Balance	1,14,73	1,32,40	2,60,46
Revenue Receipts	15,69,79	16,49,97	18,43,89
Receipts from Debt Heads	18,63,39	31,70,33	44,50,12
Total ..	35,47,91	49,52,70	65,54,47
Expenditure—			
Revenue Expenditure	16,75,38	16,73,16	25,80,57
Capital Expenditure	−2,38	−1,05	50,29
Expenditure on Debt Heads	17,96,17	30,20,13	36,63,40
Closing Balance	78,74	2,60,46	2,60,21
Total ..	35,47,91	49,52,70	65,54,47
Net Result—			
Surplus+			
Deficit—			
(a) On Revenue Account	−1,05,59	−23,19	−7,36,68
(b) Outside Revenue Account ..	+69,60	+1,51,25	+7,36,43
(c) Net, excluding opening balance ..	−35,99	+1,28,06	−25

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may we have the Food Minister's statement, either typed or printed, circulated hereafter? It is a very important matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir Nazimuddin, it is already 6-8 p.m. now. I cannot keep the House waiting any longer. Reading out a speech or an *extempore* speech from the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies is an impossibility at this stage today. It appears from what Dr. Sanyal says that he desires that printed copies of the Minister's speech may be circulated. I would like to know whether that is practicable and whether there is any objection to it.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Can the Chair really take such a suggestion into consideration? The Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies may tell the House verbally what he has got to say. I am very doubtful if the Chair can recommend such a procedure at all, because it is not known yet whether the Minister would read his speech or whether the Minister would keep his notes in hand and deliver his speech. Sir, you are establishing a convention to which members have every right to take exception. Because the honourable member for the municipalities of Murshidabad has come forward with the suggestion, it is not necessary that the Chair should give it attention. There are others also in this House who demand that the convention "that the rules of debate shall not be broken" shall not be interfered with.

Mr. SPEAKER: I quite agree with the last remarks of Mr. Siddiqi that discussion by *extempore* speeches should be encouraged and that manuscript speeches should be discouraged. There is not the slightest doubt about that. That ought to be the procedure followed in this House and henceforth I would try to see that that is done. In other words, I would discourage manuscript speeches. But with due respect to him I disagree with him when he says that it will be wrong to ask the Hon'ble Minister as to what he proposes to do. I have not asked him to do a particular thing in a particular way.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You are giving your support. (Cries of "Order, order" from the Opposition Benches. Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Learn manners.) (A Voice: From you!) (Laughter.)

Mr. SPEAKER: For the convenient transaction of business in this House, as far as my memory goes, we have departed from many things on many occasions and the rules are only intended for the convenience of carrying on business in this House. That is why I have asked Sir Nazimuddin what he has got to say in the matter.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I cannot tell you just now whether we can have it printed and circulated. Tomorrow we will see what can be done and I will inform you beforehand.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. The House stands adjourned till 4-30 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjournment.

The House was adjourned at 6-13 p.m. till 4-30 p.m. on Wednesday, the 15th September, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 15th September, 1943, at 4-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 13 Hon'ble Ministers and 181 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Inspection of primary schools by the Sub-Inspectors of Schools, Goalundo (Rajbari).

*17. **Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the present number of schools primary—

(1) for boys,

(2) for girls,

(3) mixed, and

(4) otherwise,

that are in charge of the Sub-Inspector of Schools of Goalundo (Rajbari);

(*ii*) the number of them that have been visited by the Sub-Inspector of Schools in the year 1942-43;

(*iii*) the number of days in the said year the Sub-Inspector of Schools made tour in the mufassal; and

(*iv*) the number of nights he stayed on in the mufassal during the period?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state—

(*i*) up to what period bills of salary of teachers were submitted to the School Board by the Sub-Inspector of Schools by the 15th April, 1943; and

(*ii*) up to what month the teachers have been paid in full satisfaction of their demand by the 15th April, 1943?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) (*i*) (1) Nil.

(2) 28.

(3) 182 (includes free and stipendiary schools where boys and girls read together).

(4) Nil.

(ii) Girls 15 and mixed 102.

(iii) 196 days.

(iv) 127 nights.

(b) (i) Up to March, 1943.

(ii) Up to February, 1943.

Realisation of Primary Education Cess from Railway Companies in Bengal.

*18. **Haji SAFIRUDDIN AHMED:** (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(i) the rate of rural primary education cess per rupee to be levied from the tenants of—

(1) *raiyati* holdings,

(2) *istimurari* holdings, and

(3) rent-free holdings; and

(ii) whether the Railway Companies and their staff are liable to pay the rural primary education cess?

(b) If the answer to (a) (ii) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(c) If the answer to (a) (ii) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the total amount of cess realised from—

(1) the Railway Companies, and

(2) their staff

in the province of Bengal as a whole and in the district of Rangpur in 1942-43?

(d) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the agency through which the education cess from the Railway Companies is realised?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (a) (i) Primary education cess is levied under sections 29(2) and 30(2), (3) and (4) of the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930, at the rates prescribed therein on the annual value of land determined under the Cess Act, 1880.

(ii) and (b) Under section 29(2) of the Act, cess is levied on annual net profits from Railways as determined under the Cess Act, 1880. Section 32 of the Primary Education Act provides that, subject to the provisions of Chapter IV of the Primary Education Act, the provisions of the Cess Act, 1880, shall apply as far as possible to the assessment, levy, payment and recovery of the primary education cess. Under rule 106 of the Cess Manual, Railways, whether State, Guaranteed or Private, are exempt from assessment to road and public works cesses. Railways are, therefore, exempt from payment of education cess. Property belonging to staff, if not situated within any municipality, is liable to the payment of education cess.

(c) (1) Does not arise.

(2) The information is not readily available and its collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable during war time.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Admission of Scheduled Caste candidates into Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca.

*19. **Mr. DHANANJOY ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of Scheduled Caste candidates admitted into the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca, in the year 1940, 1941 and 1942;

(*ii*) the number of Scheduled Caste candidates seeking admission in those years 1940, 1941 and 1942;

(*iii*) whether all those who applied for admission were admitted?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total strength of admission per year?

(*ii*) the number of them that are for—

(1) Muslims,

(2) Caste Hindus,

(3) Scheduled Castes, and

(4) Assam scholars?

(*d*) Do the Government contemplate to admit Scheduled Caste candidates according to Communal Rules?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*)

(*i*)	1940	... 1
	1941	... 2
	1942	... 4
(*ii*)	1940	... 2
	1941	... 3
	1942	... 6

(*iii*) No.

(*b*) Two candidates—one in 1940 and another in 1941—were not admitted as they were "over age". In 1942 two candidates did not get admission as the four seats reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates had already been filled.

(*c*) (*i*) 120. The Principal can admit 10 more in his discretion.

(*ii*)	Muslims	... 65
	Caste Hindus	... 56
	Scheduled Castes	... 4
	Assam scholars	... 5

(*d*) Government have under consideration the question of reserving more seats in the Institution for Scheduled Caste students.

Sarail Sub-Registry Office in the district of Tippera.

*20. **Maulvi MUSTAFA ALI DEWAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the Sub-Registry Office at Sarail in Tippera district has been transferred to Brahmanbaria;

(*ii*) that the documents of the Sarail *elaka* are now being registered at the new Brahmanbaria office; and

(*iii*) that the people of the Sarail *elaka* have represented for the transfer of the said office to Sarail?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the affirmative, what action do the Government contemplate to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) No. The Sarail Sub-Registry Office, registering about 1,000 documents a year, was abolished in the year 1933 on the recommendation of the Retrenchment Committee. A new joint office was established at Brahmanbaria in 1941.

(*ii*) Both at the present office and at the new joint office at Brahmanbaria.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*b*) Government do not see any justification for transferring the joint office to Sarail. The people of Sarail can easily go to Brahmanbaria.

Remission and suspension of revenues and cesses in the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore and 24-Parganas.

*21. **Mr. P. BANERJI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(*i*) that there has been a failure of 8 to 12 annas of crop in the Sunderbans of the 24-Parganas district due to the ravages of insects; and

(*ii*) that a representation has been made to the Government to that effect by the Sunderbans Landholders Association praying for remission of revenue and cesses on condition of corresponding remission of rents and cesses payable by the tenants?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what the Government propose to do in the matter?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the basis for granting remission and suspension of revenue and cesses in the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore and the 24-Parganas?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*)(*i*) About 70 per cent. of crops has been damaged by insects in some parts of the 24-Parganas Sundarbans which were not affected by the cyclone.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) and (*c*) These matters are being dealt with in accordance with the rules contained in Chapter XIV of the Bengal Tauzi Manual, 1940.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*ii*) "Yes", will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken on the said representation? There was a representation from the landholders requesting remission of revenues in these cyclone-affected areas. My question is, what action has been taken on that representation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Necessary orders have been issued under the rules contained in Chapter XIV of the Bengal Tauzi Manual, 1940.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that no orders have so far been issued for remission completely or there is merely a provision for the postponement of realisation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Remission, Sir.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that no orders have so far been issued for remission of land revenue in the cyclone-affected areas of 24-Parganas and that there has been only a few cases of postponement of realisation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Orders have been issued after this answer was ready.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in how many cases there has been remission of land revenue?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: We have not yet been informed who are the landholders who will be eligible for remission.

Relief in Midnapore.

*22. **Rai Bahadur JOGESH CHANDRA SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether Midnapore relief operation has been stopped or reduced?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) how the relief work is now being conducted in Midnapore; and

(*ii*) whether non-official agencies are still rendering help and doing relief work?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) their names; and

(*ii*) the area where they are working?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) The relief operations in Midnapore have not been stopped though owing to the monsoon test relief works have had to be largely reduced.

(*b*) (*i*) Relief is being given mainly in the following ways:—

(1) Gratuitous relief in cash and kind.
(2) Test Relief works.
(3) Agricultural loans.
(4) Sinking and re-sinking of tube-wells.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*c*) A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (c) of starred question No. 22.

Contai subdivision.

Name of non-official agency.	Area in which working.
1. Contai and Midnapore Cyclone Relief Committee.	Union X of Contai police-station.
2. Upper India Association.	Union XI of Contai police-station.
3. Ramkrishna Mission.	Union XII of Contai police-station.
4. Marwari Relief Society.	Unions IV to VII of Bhagwanpur police-station.
5. Friends Ambulance Unit.	Milk canteening to Coastal Belt.

Tamluk subdivision.

1. Naba Bidhan Mission.	Union III of Tamluk police-station.
2. Ramkrishna Mission.	Unions XIII, XIV and XV of Nandigram police-station.
3. Bharat Sevasram.	Unions IX and X of Sutahata police-station. Union XI of Mahisadal police-station. Union XII of Nandigram police-station.
4. Moslem Relief Society.	Union VII of Nandigram police-station.

Sadar South subdivision.

1. Khademul Insan Mission.	Unions II, IV, V and VI of Sabang police-station.

Sadar North subdivision.

1. Ram Krishna Mission, Sebasram, Midnapore.	Unions VI of Midnapore police-station and VII of Debra police-station.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that about two weeks ago serious complaints were received in Calcutta stating that relief works in these areas have been stopped?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It has not been stopped.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that for the time being the local officers had actually stopped its relief work and the Bengal Government in the headquarters had to be moved as against that order?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No, Sir.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that the Bengal Government had issued a Press communique stating that although the local officers under a misapprehension had stopped the relief work, the Bengal Government now propose to revive the same?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No. I do not remember the details of the communique, but this much I can say that the statement is not correct.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, of which portion the reply is "No" and which statement is not correct?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the reply given to your question, but I cannot allow this sort of cross-examination.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the daily wage of the workers per head?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It is guided by the Famine Code.

Receipt of Information from District Magistrate of Midnapore regarding cyclone.

***23. Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Revenue Department be pleased to state when the District Magistrate of Midnapore sent information to the Bengal Government about the tidal bore?

(*b*) Is it a fact that he recommended relief for the distressed people after a month?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) The District Magistrate of Midnapore sent one report on the 17th and another on the 19th

October, 1942, but they reached Government on the 20th and 21st idem respectively. The reports were despatched through messengers as all postal, telegraphic and railway communications had broken down.

(*b*) Government are not prepared to discuss on the floor of the House any confidential correspondence that may have passed between the District Officer and Government. As a matter of fact, distribution of gratuitous relief was started at several thana and other convenient centres in the cyclone-affected areas of the district immediately after the cyclone.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Realisation of agricultural loans by certificate procedure in Gaibandha subdivision.

*24. **Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that notices threatening immediate resort to certificate procedure are being issued to realise agricultural loans advanced to the agriculturist of Gaibandha subdivision; and

(*ii*) that acute distress prevails in the subdivision?

(*b*) If so, do the Government contemplate to defer the realisation of such loans till the months of next Bhadra and Aswin?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) Distress prevails in some parts of this subdivision but it has not reached an acute stage.

(*b*) A general postponement of the realisation of agricultural loans is not considered desirable. The local officers have been instructed to take coercive measures only against those who appear to be in a position to pay.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in what part of the Gaibandha subdivision the distress prevails?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: For details I want notice.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where he got this information that the distress did not reach an acute stage?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: That is the report of the local officials.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Who is the local officer—the District Magistrate or the Subdivisional Officer?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Reports are generally sent through the Commissioner and the Collector.

Construction of Evacuee Camps.

*25. **Dr. SHARAT CHANDRA MUKERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue (Civil Defence) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount of money that has been spent for the erection of evacuee camps in the whole Province;

(*ii*) the amount of money that has been spent up to the 1st March, 1943, in the district of Birbhum, for the construction of evacuee camps; and

(*iii*) whether any damage has been caused to these camps by cyclone and high winds and fire?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the additional money spent in Birbhum district for reconstruction and repair works;

(*ii*) the amount of money that has been spent for the erection of Illambazar evacuee camp (Birbhum);

(*iii*) the amount of money received when the whole lot was sold under orders of the Government;

(*iv*) the number of evacuees accommodated in these camps during the last onrush after Calcutta bombing; and

(*v*) for how many persons accommodation has been made at Suri town?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) (*i*) Rs.11,78,781-5-9.

(*ii*) Rs.1,27,110-9-6.

(*iii*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Rs. 25,515-5.

(*ii*) Rs.2,527-10.

(*iii*) Rs. 55.

(*iv*) 8,367.

(*v*) 10,000.

Extension of service to the Office Superintendent of Mymensingh Collectorate.

*26. **Maulvi ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether an extension has been granted by the Collector of Mymensingh to the present Office Superintendent of the Mymensingh Collectorate, who attains the age of superannuation on the 30th June, 1943, the due date of his retirement; and

(*ii*) whether this has been done in concurrence with the Board of Revenue?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for granting such an extension?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*)(*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why this has not been done?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) No.

(*b*) Under B.S.R. 76 a member of the clerical staff may be retained in service at the discretion of the appointing authority up to the age of 60. The present Office Superintendent has a brilliant service record and his retention was in the interests of the public service.

(*c*) The concurrence of the Board of Revenue is not required by the rules.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware and whether it is a fact that the present District Magistrate revised this extension on a monthly basis?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No, Sir.

Removal of cross-bund over the Dhapore khal, Khulna.

*27. **Mr. PATIRAM ROY:** With reference to the reply to clause (*b*) of starred question No. 102 of the 2nd August, 1940, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any enquiry has since been made into the matter; and

(*b*) what steps have been taken for the removal of the cross-bund over the Dhapore *khal*?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) It has been reported that, if the bunds across the Dhapore *khal* are removed, the fields alongside the *khal* will be flooded and there will be no cultivation unless marginal embankments are constructed I have been advised, that in view of the present necessity for growing more food the bunds should not be removed now. A scheme for the drainage of the Takipore mauza by excavating an independent channel with a box sluice at the outfall has been prepared. The question as to how this scheme should be financed is under consideration.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer that a scheme has been prepared for a box sluice at the outfall will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the scheme was prepared and at what stage the scheme now is and whether the scheme has been approved?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: The scheme has been prepared this year and orders have been issued for the execution of the scheme in the current year.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any amount of contribution from the local people and in particular from the district board has been demanded?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: No.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government of Bengal has been good enough to undertake the entire responsibility of financing the scheme?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: Yes, in co-operation with the Government of India.

Issue of notices under section 34 of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act in Chandpur.

*28. **Maulvi JONAB ALI MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of cases in which the notices under section 34 of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act have been vacated by the Munsif Courts of Chandpur in the district of Tippera on the strength of the ruling of the Hon'ble High Court recently given in connection with the decrees of the Small Causes Courts, and

(*ii*) the number of cases in which the execution of those decrees has been ordered for realising the decretal amount?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of stopping those executions during the present distress prevailing in the subdivision?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID (on behalf of the Minister in charge of the Judicial Department): (*a*) (*i*) 81.

(*ii*) 50

(*b*) The execution of decrees can be stayed only according to the provisions of law, and Government is not competent to order stay of execution.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: In view of the recent ruling of the Hon'ble the High Court, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of amending the Act so as to include the Small Causes Court within the purview of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Government contemplates to bring forward an amendment within a reasonable time.

Scheme regarding "Grow More Food" campaign.

*29. **Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state an outline of the scheme that Government intend to work out with respect to the "Grow More Food" campaign?

(b) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government contemplate to take into consideration for the same purpose the following points, namely:—

(i) irrigation of *khals*, *bils* and lowlands;

(ii) starting of farms in each subdivision;

(iii) increasing cultivable area by clearing jungles and by cultivating culturable but uncultivated lands;

(iv) procuring and distribution of improved type of seeds among the agriculturists; and

(v) adoption of inter-provincial facilities?

(c) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of requesting the Assam Government as well as the Central Government for abolishing the line system in Assam to help the solution of the food problem permanently?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain): (a) The programme of work contemplated under the "Grow More Food" campaign is—

(1) to give seed loans to the cultivators in areas where there is scarcity of seeds;

(2) to improve irrigation facilities by initiating irrigation schemes which would help to bring more lands under cultivation or to increase the production of cultivable lands;

(3) to grant *takavi* loans to the cultivators;

(4) to make propaganda for growing more food crops; and

(5) to advise the cultivators as to the best means of increasing food production and improvement of fertility of land by use of manure.

(b) Yes.

(c) This does not concern my department.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Director of Public Instruction's circular for special consideration of the claims of officers with foreign qualification for promotion.

8. Maulvi ABDUL HAKIM: Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department aware—

(a) that a circular, dated the 23rd December, 1938, and other subsequent circulars were issued by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, asking the Inspectors and other local controlling officers to specially consider the officers with foreign qualifications while sending up their recommendations for promotion;

(b) that there is a feeling of discontent among the senior and efficient officers of the Education Department against this preference for the England-returned younger officers; and

(c) that such preference debars the prospects of senior and more efficient officers?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (a) Yes, but the policy was revised in subsequent circulars and special consideration is no longer given to foreign qualifications.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Applicability of Communal Ratio Rules in case of appointment to the Calcutta University.

10. Mr. ABDUR RASCHID MAHMOOD: (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(i) the present number of (1) professors and (2) lecturers in the Calcutta University, in subjects other than Arabic, Persian, Islamic studies and Sanskrit;

(ii) the number of them that are Muslims;

(iii) the present number of University scholars in the Calcutta University in subjects other than Arabic, Persian, Islamic studies and Sanskrit;

(iv) the number of them that are Muslims;

(v) the present number of (1) Executive Officers and (2) Clerical staff in the Calcutta University; and

(vi) the number of them that are Muslims?

(b) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Communal Ratio Rules are applicable in case of appointment to the Calcutta University?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (a) A statement is laid on the Table.

(b) No.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of unstarred question No. 10.

	Present number.	Number of Muslims among them.
1. Professors in subjects other than Arabic, Persian, Islamic Studies and Sanskrit ..	21	1
2. Lecturers in subjects other than Arabic, Persian, Islamic Studies and Sanskrit ..	188	4
3. Lecturers in University Law College ..	24	1
4. University scholars in subjects other than Arabic, Persian, Islamic Studies and Sanskrit ..	1,348	157
5. Executive officers ..	14	Nil
6. Clerical staff ..	200	6

Pay and prospects of officers of Education Department as recommended by Wordsworth Committee.

11. Maulvi ABDUL HAKIM: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister of Education Department aware that the Wordsworth Committee submitted its Report to the Government of Bengal in 1921 recommending certain improvements in the pay and prospects of the officers of the Education Department particularly in the lower rank?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate to give effect to the said recommendations of the Committee?

(*c*) Is it in the contemplation of Government to create some more posts in the scale of Assistant Head Masters for the efficient and senior teachers as contemplated by the late Sir P. C. Mitter, formerly Member of the Executive Council in charge of Education, Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Salary scales have been since revised and the report is out of date.

(*c*) No.

Number of Artisans admitted in the Ahsanullah School of Engineering.

12. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of artisans that have been admitted in the workshop of the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca, during the last 5 years; and

(*b*) the number of them that are (1) Muslims, (2) Caste Hindus and (3) Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to unstarred question No. 12.

Year of admission.		Muslims.	Caste Hindus.	Scheduled Castes.	Total.
1938	..	14	12	5	31
1939	..	28	10	6	44
1940	..	15	15	5	35
1941	..	30	9	6	45
1942	..	25	17	6	48

Appointments made in Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca.

13. Mr. TARINI CHARAN PRAMANIK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of appointments made in the different departments (e.g., workshop and office) of Ahsanullah School of Engineering at Dacca since 1939 up to 1st March, 1943, with dates; and

(*ii*) whether the Service Ratio Rules were followed when those appointments were made?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to show the reasons therefor?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of the Scheduled Caste candidates serving in that School.

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Government contemplate to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*)

(*i*) Teaching staff ... 7
Workshop ... 13
Office ... 5

A statement about them furnishing particulars is laid on the Table.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) Does not arise.

(*c*) Eight.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Statements referred to in reply to clause (a)(I) of unstarred question No. 13.

The following appointments have been made since 1939 up to 1st March, 1943, in the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca.

(*I*) *Appointments of workshop staff.*	Caste.	Date of appointment.	Remarks.
1. Mohiuddin Bhuyan, 4th Smith	Muslim ..	19-6-41	
2. Akbar Ali, 3rd Moulder ..	Do. ..	1-2-40	
3. Md. Sharif Hossain, New Moulder.	Do. ..	1-9-41	
4. Golam Mowla, New Moulder	Do. ..	1-9-41	
5. Birendra K. Seal, Officiating Head Turner.	Scheduled Caste.	1-3-42	
6. Hafizuddin, Officiating Fitter	Muslim ..	8-4-42	
7. Kutubuddin Ahmed, Officiating Head Moulder.	Do. ..	1-9-41	
8. Md. Aref, Officiating 2nd Turner.	Do. ..	1-10-41	
9. Md. Eanus, Officiating 2nd Moulder.	Do. ..	1-3-42	
10. Santosh Ch. Sarker ..	Scheduled Caste.	8-4-42	
11. Hafizuddin, Head Carpenter	Muslim ..	1-9-41	
12. Jadu Nath Pal, Head Mistry	Scheduled Caste.	29-8-41	
13. Ali Hossain, Tyndal ..	Muslim ..	1-3-40	
(*II*) *Clerical appointments in office.*			
1. Maulvi Motiur Rahman, clerk and accountant, on Rs.80—105.	Muslim ..	11-8-39	Direct.
2. Maulvi Serajul Huq, head clerk, on Rs.90—130.	Do. ..	19-9-39	Promotion.
3. Babu Kantimay Sur, third clerk, on Rs.35—80.	Caste Hindu.	9-12-39	Direct.
4. Maulvi Md. Musharrof Hussain, second clerk, on Rs.35—80.	Muslim ..	9-12-39	Do.
5. Babu Chandra K. Sarkar, head clerk, on Rs.90—130.	Caste Hindu.	11-11-41	Promotion.

(III) Appointment made in the School.	Caste.	Date of appointment.	Remarks.
1 Babu Chittapriya Ghosh, Lecturer, now on deputation.	Caste Hindu.	27-11-40	Direct.
2. Maulvi Moinul Islam, Lecturer	Muslim ..	7-9-42	Officiating basis.
3. Babu Tejendra Bhattasali, Lecturer.	Caste Hindu.	7-7-41	Do.
4. Babu Sisir Kumar Bose ..	Do. ..	24-8-42	Do.
5. Babu Sisir Kumar Ghosh (now on deputation).	Do. ..	25-7-41	He has been selected for permanent appointment.
6. Maulvi Muzafar Ali, Assistant Teacher.	Muslim ..	15-8-41	Direct.
7. Maulvi Shaikh Syed Ahmed, Games Master.	Do. ..	15-9-41	Do.

Non-Muslim staff of Sakhawat Memorial School for Muslim Girls.

14. Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of teachers in the staff of the Sakhawat Memorial Girls' School; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are (1) Muslims and (2) non-Muslims?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the School is meant only for Moslem girls?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for appointing non-Muslim lady teachers in preference to Muslim ones?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be further pleased to state whether the teacher who has been most recently appointed is a Muslim or a non-Muslim?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) 24.

(*ii*) Muslims 11 and non-Muslims 13.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) In view of the paucity of qualified Muslim teachers.

(*d*) Non-Muslim.

Publication of advertisements regarding sabotage.

15. Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Publicity Department be pleased to state whether the Bengal Government have published the advertisements appearing in the different English and vernacular newspapers in Calcutta regarding sabotage and other prejudicial acts perpetrated by persons during the month of August, 1942, and thereafter?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(i) whether the cost of such publications is borne by Bengal Government; and

(ii) if so, under what head or heads of expenditure?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Pulin Behary Mullick): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to enlighten us as to whether this Government or the Central Government is responsible for the publication of advertisement regarding sabotage?

The Hon'ble Mr. PULIN BEHARY MULLICK: These advertisements were sent by the Calcutta Press Syndicate Limited.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who are the proprietors of the Calcutta Press Syndicate Ltd.?

The Hon'ble Mr. PULIN BEHARY MULLICK: I do not know.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any grant or subsidy has been granted to that Press Syndicate from Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. PULIN BEHARY MULLICK: No.

Lease of a char of Sandwip Khal to a certain person.

16. Maulana Md. MANIRUZZAMAN ISLAMABADI: (a) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware—

(i) that the present Khas Tahsildar of Sadar Khas Mahal, Chittagong, has leased out temporarily a vast tract of uncultivable *char* land of Sandwip Khal, in mauza Bhater Khil, Sitakundo police-station, to one Hakim Baksh for grazing purposes at a rate of Rs.30 per annum; and

(ii) that inconvenience has been caused to thousands of cultivators of neighbouring villages for want of grazing land?

(b) If the answer to (a) (i) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of—

(i) cancelling the aforesaid lease; and

(ii) permitting the cultivators for the grazing of their cattle?

(c) If the answer to (a) is in the negative, do the Government contemplate to make an inquiry into the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (a) (i) Yes. As the *char* has not yet become fit for cultivation a short-term grazing lease has been granted under rule 90 of the Crown Estates Manual.

(*ii*) No. The cultivators can graze their cattle in the *char* as well as on the slopes of the hills on payment of fees to the settlement-holders of these lands.

(*b*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) The cultivators can graze their cattle on payment of fees.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Relief in Ghatal subdivision through local contribution.

17. Mr. HARENDRA NATH DOLUI: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware of the contribution locally realised by Subdivisional Officer, Ghatal, for the relief of the local people rendered helpless due to havoc caused by the last cyclone?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount so realised; and

(*ii*) the amount spent towards their supply of food, clothing and materials for house building, etc.

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) Some contributions to the Midnapore District Cyclone Relief Fund were received by the Subdivisional Officer from the people of Ghatal subdivision as well as from outsiders.

(*b*) (*i*) Rs.2,894-14.

(*ii*) The District Cyclone Relief Committee allotted Rs.500 for gratuitous relief and Rs.4,000 for reconstruction of houses. A sum of Rs.85-4 was also allotted for distribution of *saris* among the poor women of certain villages. Besides 205 pieces of cloth and 25 pieces of blankets were sent to Ghatal by the said Committee for distribution among the needy people of the subdivision.

Expenditure incurred by Government on account of supply of food and cloth in the subdivision amounted to Rs.2,223-15 and Rs.184-7-6 respectively.

Date and time for discussion of the Adjournment Motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I promised yesterday to give you the time for discussion of the adjournment motion moved yesterday. I fix 4 p.m. tomorrow as the time for discussion of this adjournment motion.

Procedure about taking answers to starred questions as read.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA HUTI: [illegible] অবলম্বন করা হয়েছে প্রশ্ন সম্বন্ধে তাতে আমার নিবেদন এই যে প্রশ্ন যাতে আগের দিন পাই সেই ব্যবস্থা করলে প্রশ্ন সম্বন্ধে আমরা প্রস্তুত হয়ে আসতে পারব।

Mr. SPEAKER: No new procedure has been adopted. It is only to give you more [illegible] I have adopted this procedure today.

Statement by the Hon'ble Minister, Civil Supplies.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, would I be in order if I were to continue the agenda of yesterday and make a statement on food?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not on the agenda paper today.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I submit that on an important matter like the food situation, particularly in view of the saving of time that you have so kindly arranged today, we would like the Food Minister to make a statement. It has been customary to permit Ministers of Government to make statements.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you all agree I certainly have no objection. I think the Opposition has got no objection.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: How long will it take?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: 20 minutes.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: May I just point out, now that you have decided that the Hon'ble Food Minister is going to read his statement, that a large number of telegrams are pouring in from all parts of the Province and the sample wording of these telegrams is this: "No rice in Serajganj market six days. People starving. District Magistrate approached without effect. Kindly order immediate despatch of 20,000 maunds from Government stock."

Mr. SPEAKER: May I know with what object you are reading the telegram?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I am reading the messages with this object. Now that the Hon'ble Minister is going to read his statement, I would like to draw his attention to the fact that there is a serious situation prevailing in almost all parts of the Province on account of want of rice and in the statement which the Hon'ble Minister will place before us it is necessary that he should be able to assure the House and through the House the public that some arrangements are being immediately made, quite apart from other steps which Government propose to take, so that the Province may be saved from immediate starvation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then you have no objejction to his making his statement now. Government is willing and the Opposition has no objection. I therefore call upon Mr. Suhrawardy to make his statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, before I make my
ment I should like to make an apology. I had intended to make
ex tempore in the House regarding the food situation, but
the topic combined with my indifferent health has in
in writing a brief outline of some of the steps which
taken since our last meeting, the situation as it now sta
for the future.

The foodgrains which on the last occasion I stated we were sending or were on the move, have been duly despatched to the deficit areas and have helped greatly in relieving the situation. Further despatches are constantly being made, but the extent is limited, partly by supplies and partly by the inadequacy of transport facilities within the province. Up till now, we have not been able to speed up these transport facilities and our programme for moving foodgrains is always behindhand because we are unable to get the necessary wagons.

The following quantities of foodgrains have been ordered to be despatched from Calcutta, some of which are already on the move. These are in addition to allotments of wheat products which are now being sent to the mufassal areas directly from the Punjab and which are fairly substantial and also in addition to foodgrains being sent for relief measures to the cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore and 24-Parganas and the flooded areas of Burdwan and Midnapore and in addition to movements from one district to another:—

To Chittagong division—62,000 maunds of rice, 30,000 maunds of bajra and 32,000 maunds of *dal*.

To Chandpur in addition—55,000 maunds of rice.

To Faridpur and its subdivisions—81,500 maunds of rice, 40,000 maunds of *dal* and 20,000 maunds of bajra.

To Dacca and its subdivisions—47,500 maunds of rice and 17,500 maunds of bajra.

To Darjeeling—79,500 maunds of rice, 10,000 maunds of gram and 3,000 maunds of maize.

To Barisal and Bhola—16,000 maunds of rice.

To Midnapore—27,000 maunds of rice.

To Tangail—15,000 maunds of rice, 25,000 maunds of bajra and 10,000 maunds of *dal*.

As I have said, Sir, these are the orders which have already been placed but more will be sent to other districts as soon as we have been able to take an estimate of the situation. (A voice from the Opposition: Will these reach those places at all?) I am sure, Sir, that these will reach the proper quarters. On the last occasion I announced to the House that I was sending foodgrains to various places and all those foodgrains have been despatched. There is no reason to suppose that these foodgrains which I have promised will not be despatched.

Next, feeding plans have been prepared for every village and union and as far as possible the local requirements are being met by a continued system of equitable distribution and by the movement of supplies from surplus to deficit patches, and from Calcutta.

Thirdly, Bengal has been organised on a famine basis and famine relief organisations are being set up in all those areas where distress prevails or where distress is apprehended. Very detailed instructions have been

issued; at the same time local officers have been left a considerable amount of discretion and initiative and they have been charged with the duty of opening relief kitchens and organising relief committees as rapidly as possible. Already 2,200 kitchens have been opened in the rural areas of Bengal which, on an average, are feeding 500 persons per kitchen and more are being constantly and daily opened. To find supplies for these kitchens, which are almost wholly run at Government expense but with which non-official endeavour is being increasingly associated has given rise to problems of great complexity and magnitude, particularly because these kitchens have been opened in those areas where foodgrains are scarce. In order to expedite the giving of relief and spread the organisation further and wider and to keep all District and Subdivisional and Circle Officers up to the mark, the appointment of a senior officer of experience and energy is being considered who will be able to co-ordinate and standardise relief work throughout the distressed areas (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Still under consideration?).

The Calcutta drive has been held and the figures show that the stocks are neither considerable in the hands of consumers nor of the trade nor the employers.

After considerable confusion, the provincial barriers have once more been imposed and a new basic plan evolved based on the estimate of the various provincial Governments of their requirements and their surpluses. The Bengal Government has been asked to get rice, wheat, millets and gram from the various provinces and in each one of them to set up its inspection and forwarding agents at short notice, or lose its supplies. The procurement has kept pace with transport facilities.

Another regional food conference has been held in the earlier portion of which the Hon'ble Member for Food, Government of India, was present and many of the differences between the provinces were resolved.

The Government of India in the Finance Department has placed some money in our hands to enable us to meet the requirements of the various districts for gratuitous relief through gruel or *kichuri* kitchens or through doles in kind, test relief works, agricultural loans and cheap grain shops. The amount at our disposal is not sufficient and we have had to supplement them by raising money through treasury bills.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: What is the amount?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I think they have given us a crore and a half for this month, but I expect that the amount will be repeated in the next month and the month after.

The *aus* crop has to some extent relieved the great distress in many districts arising out of shortage of foodgrains and several agents have been appointed for the purchase of rice and paddy covering nearly all the districts of Bengal.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Who are they?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Their names have been printed in the papers over and over again.

Six districts have been cordoned off which, in accordance with our estimates, will have a surplus *aus* crop. Deficit areas have been linked up with these surplus districts and movement of foodgrains from a surplus to a deficit district which is linked up with it is freely permitted but under permits so as to be able to keep a tally on movements. Purchases will be made even in the non-surplus districts of all rice and paddy that may be offered, but they will not be moved from the deficit districts. These foodgrains will be utilised within the district for controlled distribution and for relieving distress. Coupled with the purchase of *aus*, a descending scale of controlled prices has been fixed and the vicious rise in prices which brought untold misery to hundreds and thousands of people has been checked. It is gratifying to note that the price control has been maintained and that rice is re-appearing in our markets at controlled rates (Cries of 'No', 'No' from the Opposition Benches) (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Where can we get it?) It is quite possible, Sir——(Uproar).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The fact remains that when price control was first brought in, rice disappeared from the markets, but it is reappearing. At the same time, I am prepared to admit, and I am receiving telegrams, that in some markets rice is disappearing and this, I am afraid, is largely due to the propaganda which has been carried on by certain members of the Opposition to the effect that price control is not possible without supplies.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: That is perfectly true.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That may be perfectly true, but you will realise that supplies are there. Rice cannot possibly disappear from the market in one day. It has been deliberately kept back by the trade, and I shall point out to you that owing unfortunately to the mischievous propaganda which has been carried on by certain members of the Opposition——(Uproar).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: May I suggest, Sir, that on an important matter like this when a statement is made, if Mr. Suhrawardy will avoid recriminations, that would be much better——(Uproar).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. It is desirable that on such a momentous question you will give a patient hearing to the Hon'ble Minister. You may not agree with many a statement that he may make. You will have your opportunity of criticising that, but I know that on certain occasions an interjection may bring out something new. You may do that, but if you go beyond that, it will certainly be wrong.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: We are not, however, out of the woods yet. It will take some time before the trade adjusts itself to the falling prices and realises that we are determined to keep the prices down and to take all steps to see that supplies are maintained. It is a matter of regret that in spite of all the appeals that I made to the trade for co-operation and in spite of Government having adopted generally their advice, the trade has not responded to our policy. Already, I have under consideration the cases of traders who refuse to put their stocks on the market or to continue their normal trade and I am afraid that I shall have to take steps against them and cancel their licences so as to debar them from further trading. District Magistrates are being instructed to take steps against traders who have stopped placing stocks in the market and have suspended their normal trade as a protest against or in opposition to the policy of Government to bring down prices. In the meantime I am taking steps to supply the markets with rice and atta from our stock not only in Calcutta but in those areas of the mufassal where the stocks have been withheld by the trade. I shall not, however, be content with this, and steps are being taken to ferret out all concealed stocks for which substantial rewards are being offered. I would like to advise the trade—and if they will not take my advice, let them not blame me if I have to take serious steps against them—I would like to advise the trade to put their stocks on the market at once and play the game by the people of Bengal, by the producers and the consumers out of whom they make their living.

Although the height of the distress has been to some extent alleviated by the advent of the *aus* crop, distress, even famine conditions, still exist in an acute form in many areas. The price of rice still remains far too high for the average population, and undoubtedly this has led to grave distress throughout the province even where foodgrains are available. The difficulties are undoubtedly greatly accentuated in those areas where there is scarcity of foodgrains and where there is no *aus* crop, and in these areas the distress conditions are appalling. All that we have done or can do depends on supplies and if we have not the supplies within the province, supplies must come from outside. As we get in further supplies, they have to be rushed to those areas which are in grave distress and arrangements have been set up for their proper requisite distribution. In the matter of supplies we have to make the best of our internal resources and at the same time get in as much supplies as possible from outside. The *aus* crop this year, in spite of damages and the fact that most of the *aus* is of the early variety and therefore yields less grain, is surplus in some of the districts. But to expect and hope that mathematical allocation is possible for the *aus* crop is to hope and expect the impossible and could only have been entertained by those who bring to bear on the problems of Bengal ideas and solutions wholly divorced from realities. As every one knows, the *aus* crop is not a marketable commodity. It is a consumer's crop. It has come after a period of great distress. It has come when the psychology of the people is attuned to caution and where the distress of others has only served to increase the instinct of self-preservation. There are many reasons that

I can give to prove that meticulous statistical distribution is impossible in the case of the *aus* crop. In spite of all drawbacks, however we have taken all the best possible steps that could have been taken under the soundest advice that the Chambers of Commerce could offer to us to purchase and distribute as much of the crop as we can. But there can be no doubt about it that without substantial imports of foodgrains from outside we are not in a position to meet the situation. I am amazed at the ignorance prevailing in generally well-informed circles regarding the Bengal position and the reason why there is a shortage. There are still people in India who suggest that there is enough foodgrain in Bengal and that by false propaganda we are declaring a shortage which does not exist and are overdramatising the situation.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: You said so only a month ago.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I have never said so.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: You are now making fine distinctions.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I can understand this from the representatives of those provinces who are themselves in deficit and who are most anxious that their deficit should not be lost sight of in the consideration of the extremely distressed conditions in some parts of Bengal. There are others however who have even no such justification of self-preservation for the view which they hold but there are people also who are asking in all genuineness for the reasons why there is a shortage of foodstuffs in Bengal. During my recent stay in Delhi I have met journalists, from various climes and countries all asking the question, the answer to which we know so well in Bengal but which seems to have been lost sight of in political controversies. For their benefit I will set out seriatim and in very brief detail some of the reasons as they strike me:—

(1) We begin with the failure of the *aus* crop of 1942. There was severe drought and the crop burnt up in most of the areas. The agriculturist therefore had to fall back on his reserves from the previous crop which was better than the average.

(2) Then there was the failure of the *aman* crop of 1942-43. Some estimate the shortage at 3 million tons; some a little bit more, and some less. That there were no general reserves is proved by the fact that as soon as the crop came on to the market people started eating the new crop in some of the areas—the surest sign of approaching distress or famine, a sign which should have been taken note of by the then administration, a sign which should have warned them to take steps as against future catastrophe.

(3) Then there is the havoc caused by cyclone and floods in which the most prolific areas of Bengal in Midnapore and 24-Parganas were destroyed cent. per cent., and whose population has had to be fed entirely from other outside resources.

(4) In several districts a kind of pest just before the cutting of the crop created havoc with the standing crop.

The difficulties created by these cataclysms have been accentuated by certain steps due to military causes—none of them perhaps of any great magnitude if taken individually but cumulatively causing a serious inroad on our resources.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about the denial policy?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Will you kindly allow me to continue?

(5) The boat denial policy interfered with the cultivation in the char areas, with the movement of commodities and also with deep-sea fishing.

(6) The evacuation of the coastal areas threw a considerable amount of land out of cultivation and also threw a large portion of the population on other areas which had barely enough for their subsistence.

(7) Refugees from Burma and Arakan poured into Bengal and swelled the category of consumers.

(8) There has been a tremendous increase of industrial activity and an influx of industrial labour from the rest of India, particularly Bihar, Orissa, the United Provinces and the Punjab.

(9) There was the loss of import from Burma, the net import representing 200,000 tons.

(10) Aerodrome construction has also put out of cultivation some lands, has diverted labour from the fields, and at the same time has produced another consuming non-productive population. A proportion of these labourers come from outside Bengal.

(11) There has been a further influx of a consuming population in the shape of the military. Their requirements other than foodgrains have to be met from local resources.

(12) Last but not least, there is great shortage of normal imports from other provinces which would have been a most valuable addition to our resources.

Is it to be wondered at that there should be a serious shortage of foodgrains in this province, and is it to be wondered at if we stress the point that the peculiar conditions of Bengal cast on the Government of India an added responsibility to come to our aid? When I attended the last Food conference in July I was amazed at the scepticism of the representatives from the other provinces, when I pointed out to them the parlous condition of Bengal. What this was due to I will not refer at this stage, as I am making a bald statement of facts and do not wish to enter into a controversy. But it seemed to me too that the Government of India itself was to a large extent infected by those ideas. It was fortunate that a distinguished son of Bengal, the Hon'ble Sir Azizul Huque, was placed in charge of the Food Department and his efforts have been to some extent responsible for changing the attitude of the Government of India towards Bengal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is why he has been removed.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That is not a fair statement for the honourable member to make. I am fully aware that the Hon'ble Sir Azizul Haque himself relinquished his portfolio. Any insinuation or allegation to the contrary is false.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You may also be removed after this bald statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The new Food Member of the Government of India, the Hon'ble Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava has taken a very keen interest in our affairs. Almost his first act was to come down to Calcutta, meet persons of all shades of opinion and all interests in order to appraise the situation himself. Through my constant contact with him at Delhi and at Lahore I am convinced that he will leave no stone unturned to send foodgrains to Bengal which we so badly need. Already the Bengal allotment of rice has been increased by 15,000 tons from the Punjab alone and 8,000 tons from the Central Provinces and efforts are being made to procure as much of the foodgrains allotted under the basic plan as possible within the next 3 months. Sir Jwala Prasad will be soon proceeding to Simla to use his influence to expedite this procurement, and thereafter he will proceed to Sind to see what can be done in that direction. The Transport Department has also made arrangements for despatching foodgrains by trains as well as by ships. Special wagons will be allotted for free foodgrains which will be allowed to come outside the quota, and more wagons will be allotted if necessary. The Military Water Transport are allotting ships for foodgrains from Sind and the West Coast ports and within the last few days a substantial amount of wheat and millet and a certain amount of rice have come into Bengal.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Where have they all gone?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: They are all here and they are being distributed. It is only now that after long last we are able to see some light and some hope surges in our breast that we may by the aid of the Almighty be able to alleviate the present situation. Our cordial thanks are due to Sir Jwala Prasad for the efforts that he is making, and our earnest prayer to the Almighty is that his efforts may be crowned with success. Although we have not sufficient supplies, still in the hope that those supplies will be forthcoming, we are pushing on with our efforts to ration Calcutta. More and more distribution centres have been opened, officers have come back after profiting by lectures held in Bombay by Mr. Kirby, the rationing expert from England. We are fortunate that Mr. Kirby himself is in Calcutta to guide us in the operations. The rationing scheme is being pushed through with the greatest vigour and expedition——

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: The operation is successful but the patient will die.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: And I hope that shortly in the month of October we shall be in a position fully to ration Calcutta. My target date of the 1st of October, I regret to say, cannot be fulfilled. The work is colossal and the organisation that will have to be set up needs recruitment and training, but I hope that by that date partial rationing will be enforced in many zones and a large portion of the public will have the benefit of distribution from our centres. Distribution is also being pushed forward and I hope that within a short time the districts of 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Howrah, the distressed portion of Burdwan and Midnapore and certain areas in Bankura and Birbhum will be covered with a network of free kitchens and cheap grain shops, and that I shall be in a position to send substantial amount of foodgrains to places like Faridpur, Dacca with its distressed subdivisions, Tippera, Noakhali and Chittagong and other areas in distress. I am happy to be able to announce that we have in store and in process of manufacture and in process of despatch a substantial amount of *atta*. This, I propose, to place on the market at six annas a seer. The mills will get wheat from us at Rs. 12-4 a maund and we shall supply the *atta* to the retailers at Rs. 14 a maund. We are able to make this reduction in price owing to the reserve that we had accumulated in the first days when the wheat was sent to us, and we could not gauge exactly the expenses that we would have to incur. The present price of annas 6 a seer will mean a continuous loss to us, but we can afford this loss against the reserve which we have accumulated. At Delhi and the Punjab I found that there was considerable perturbation over the alleged profits that were being made by the Government of Bengal on the wheat transactions. The figures which had been put out by us were not even known to them. I published the figures once more, I made it clear to them that in the beginning we had laid by some reserves, but at present prices we would be undergoing a loss. I agreed to give further consideration to the matter and at the same time I have offered to the Governments of India and the Punjab that they should send me some costing advisers who would in conjunction with an officer of the Bengal Government go through the prices of wheat and *atta* and see if anything can be done to revise the price downwards still further, keeping in view the fundamental fact that no Government shall make a profit on these transactions and that no private party shall profiteer at the expense of the Governments, the consumer and the producer. I hope and trust that, if any apprehension is still felt, my offer can be accepted as I am most anxious to bring down the prices and to see that other Governments who are sending their foodgrains to this province should have no cause for complaint.

And now, I come to the situation which has aroused the attention of India to the appalling conditions prevailing in Bengal, namely, the influx of the destitutes to Calcutta and the district towns. This is a subject which has to be dealt with caution and with reverence as we are in the presence of tragedies which are occurring around us every day. To some this has provided an opportunity for casting stones at others and diverting the shaft of opprobrium and responsibility from themselves. To some others this

has provided an opportunity for party political propaganda and to create a sentiment against the present Ministry. Some have taken advantage of this to create an atmosphere that they and they alone were saving the lives of the people, and that the present Ministry in Bengal was doing nothing. They and they alone probably jointly with other relief organisations have not spent more than two lakhs of rupees whereas the Ministry has spent at least four crores of rupees in the recognised form of relief work and another three crores of rupees in giving relief to the middle classes by supplying rice at subsidy rates through cheap grain shops, I would not have referred to this aspect of relief at all as I greatly value non-official assistance and have endeavoured in my own way to encourage, organise and help them and give prominence to their activities but for the fact that this has been unfortunately utilised as a weapon against Government and for conducting propaganda against it. To some others this has provided an opportunity for exercising their dormant instincts of charity which were not aroused as long as distress was confined to the villages. In Calcutta today there are 140 kitchens managed by several organisations, hard at work, serving food to these destitutes who have migrated from the surrounding districts which have been most afflicted by scarcity. I pay my tribute of gratitude and thanks to these organisations that have taken on this task as, otherwise, it would have had to be borne entirely by Government but which cannot possibly be satisfactorily undertaken without non-official assistance and organisation. Most, if not all, of these organisations are being subsidised by Government and have been standardised and co-ordinated by the Relief Control Officer who has been placed in charge of these kitchens. With meagre supplies in hand we had to cut down the amount of foodgrains per head; with better supplies coming in we have decided to increase the *per capita* allotment and make special provision for nursing mothers and infants. But this is merely a palliative; it is no solution of the problem. We have therefore taken steps to remove these people to shelters, treat them, clothe them, send them out to camps outside Calcutta and ultimately to repatriate them to their homes, not to starve, but to be fed. They will be removed only when in their homes similar relief kitchens have been set up to meet the distress in that area. To meet the insensate propaganda that we intend to remove them merely because the attention of India may not be attracted to the appalling conditions in Bengal, we have invited non-officials to inspect every single step of our arrangements. Unhappily, in spite of all the steps we have taken and are taking and in spite of our having opened up hospitals to receive the sick destitutes death is taking place in the streets and in the hospitals. With people starving and famished, wandering away from their homes, away from their shelters, away from the environments which supported them, in a state of economic submersion, with no vitality to bear the inclemencies of the sun and rain in a strange land, some are unhappily bound to succumb and death must take its toll. In reverence I mourn their death. Perhaps they have not died in vain as they have focussed the attention of India to the terrible conditions prevailing in this province, have roused the Government of India to action which is already bearing fruit and has

aroused the sympathy of the Indian peoples to the need for succour. I remember a member of the Food Conference dilating on this aspect. He said that it was from my lips for the first time that the conference and the representatives of the provinces and states were being told of the magnitude of the distress within Bengal. The people of India fed hitherto on different stories were not prepared to believe it and propaganda was necessary to enlighten them regarding the situation. Indeed, these unfortunate people have not died in vain and their death may be the cause of saving millions of others from distress and starvation.

Some may ask at this stage why has the situation been allowed to develop? I am afraid that it was inevitable. There is a shortage of foodgrains in the province and some areas were in serious deficit. There was phenomenal rise in prices. The village people could not afford any longer to feed the destitutes of their area. We saw the danger approaching. We were helpless to do more than alleviate the situation. Foodgrains were sent as much and as rapidly as possible. Money was sent but without foodgrains gratuitous relief could not be dispensed in a sufficient measure. The distress was widely prevalent and I needed foodgrains for gratuitous relief, for test relief works and for agricultural loans—foodgrains which were non-existent. I claim that we have done the best that we could with the resources at our disposal and I believe that though dark and dismal days are still ahead of us we are in a position to face the future with more hope and assurance than hitherto and with better supplies ahead of us, effectively to organise relief throughout the length and breadth of Bengal. When I was at Delhi and Lahore I found the atmosphere surcharged with falsehood sedulously propagated by Mahasabhaites against the Bengal Ministry. It is a colossal pity that Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has been making unfounded insinuations and allegations against the firm of M. M. Ispahani, Ltd.——

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Face an open enquiry.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: ——and has been broadcasting the speech which he delivered in the House in the last debate containing all kinds of base and unfounded charges against the Company—charges which were smashed by me on the floor of the House. In spite of that the insinuations have been repeated without deletion. I say it is unfortunate not for the Ispahanis who have shoulders broad enough to bear the brunt of these charges and whose probity and efficiency in business circles is well known for generations. It is unfortunate, however, for the people of Bengal because these allegations, in every particular, harm the cause of the people of Bengal and give rise to an impression in India that there is something seriously wrong in the administration of the province but not with the food situation.

Sir, I have heard an interjection from the other side of the House that I am a partner of the Ispahanis. Let me inform the House that I am not a partner of the Ispahanis and I have no personal interest in that firm. Let me inform the House that if that charge is again repeated it will be a charge deliberately made against me, knowing it to be false——

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Why not come to a court of law?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The honourable members on the other side of the House, whom I might not call honourable for making these charges but whom I have got to call "honourable", are not worth my attention in a court of law.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Why not have an open enquiry and let the public know?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: There is no scope for an open enquiry. The scandal-mongering of vicious intellects does not justify an open enquiry. Sir, the scandal-mongering goes on day after day and fertile imaginations of vicious intellects are busy manufacturing vile insinuations and in whispering them through diseased political galleries. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mere abuses will not help.) The firm of Ispahanis have borne the scandal-mongering tales with dignity and fortitude. Their reputation for probity and honour remains as high as ever in spite of all the attempts to besmirch them with vile insinuations. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Resign your Ministership and defend Ispahanis before an open tribunal.) They have been advised to treat these charges with scorn, for all know that they are false, false to the knowledge of the utterers and have their origin in political frustration and envy. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: What an impartial Minister!) But patience has its limits. The latest canard is that their godowns have been locked and searched by Government and that they have been detected in the process of committing a great fraud. The fact is that during the drive the inspecting officers estimated the stocks of Mirza Ali Akbar who is one of our handling and storing agents——

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Who is he? Is he a *benamdar* of Ispahanis?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Yes, he is.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That is another false and stupid allegation that is made.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: What have Ispahanis got to do with Mirza Ali Akbar?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: They are the handling and inspecting agents of Government. The figure which was given by our inspecting agents was a figure different from the stocks shown in the accounts of the office of the Foodgrains Purchasing Officer. Mirza Ali Akbar stated that those godowns contained nothing but Government stocks, that he had no private stock of his own or of any client, that he was not interested in these stocks and he would welcome if Government would examine the stocks and make a tally. The godowns were accordingly sealed and a stock has been taken. It is obvious that in taking the stock

and the weights, we have not been able to weigh every bag but have proceeded on the basis that 2½ maund bags contained 2½ maunds and 2 maund bags contained 2 maunds. The latest figures show that in a turnover of 14 lakhs of maunds from that godown, there has been a difference only of 700 maunds. This has been made the foundation of serious allegation not against the firm of Mirza Ali Akbar, the handling and storing agent but that of Messrs. M. M. Ispahani, Ltd.

But, Sir, may I take this opportunity to make an earnest appeal to the members of the Opposition to drop this unnecessary decrying and defaming of a company that has come to our rescue at a most critical moment and has been able in the teeth of frantic opposition to procure foodgrains which have enabled us to keep our control shops and distributing centres going, to feed Calcutta and to feed the honourable members of the Opposition for the matter of that and the essential services——(A voice from the Opposition benches: What about the Minister and his party?), to feed us, the members of this side as well and to send supplies to deficit areas and to find grains for each gruel kitchen. Is it not possible to cry a halt to allegations and insinuations? My offer to the Opposition to examine their accounts and papers has not yet been accepted.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I did accept and you asked me to go to Ispahanis.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: You did not.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I did.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Everybody will remember that and I wish to explain it, Sir, because Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee is taking advantage of his position over there to make a statement. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee came on one day when I was working in bed and he told me that he had certain information at his disposal to the effect that foodgrains had been purchased at a lower figure than could be shown in Mr. Ispahani's books of account.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Not that. You have forgotten that.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That is so far as I remember. Whatever it was, I asked Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, repeating my offer to him, to go to the firm of Messrs. Ispahani where all the books of account and papers were placed and to satisfy himself on the matter. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee refused the offer. He said that he was not prepared to go to the firm of Messrs. Ispahani, but I should get all the papers and books from Messrs. Ispahani and place them at his disposal. I told him further that that was an impossibility, but that if he would give me facts and figures, I would have them tested by Government officers and I would report to him the result. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee did not place those facts and figures before me. I further told Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee—and probably that is the reason why he did not proceed in the matter further and since he has confined himself to insinuations and allegations—that there were three

officers of the Accountant-General's office working night and day from the beginning in Mr. Ispahani's office who were looking not only through his books of account, but through all his correspondence, through all his papers, through all the advices, through all the telegrams sent by his agents and through all the contracts.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This is a rank false statement.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: This is not a false statement.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will you come with me to the Accountant-General's office and I will prove it to be false? I give you a challenge that I will prove it to be false.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: It may be that all the three accountants did not come from the Accountant-General's office, but the statement is absolutely correct that there are three accountants sitting there in Ispahani's office.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Since when three? There was only one. Three only recently?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No, not recently. They have been there for a considerable time. If the honourable member wishes to know the date, I shall be able to give him the date in reply. However, that is a different matter. There are three accountants sitting there examining all the papers and documents and I think that ought to be sufficient to give the quietus to all the allegations and insinuations. But I would like to repeat the offer once more so that if Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee changes his mind, he may still go and examine the books of account.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Why should I go? Why not a Judge?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I want to make an appeal again to him and to the members of the Opposition for co-operation in our policy laid down to bring down the price and make foodgrains available to the public. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: It is a stupid and dishonest Government.) Before I sit down I would like to say a few words regarding our neighbours. The Premier of Orissa has promised to de-requisition all the rice and paddy and to replace all the rice which has been requisitioned, to allow rice and paddy under contract to go into Bengal and, over and above that, to send some more from his surplus. On behalf of the people of Bengal, I wish to thank him and the people of Orissa for their generosity. They themselves are in difficulties. Some of the areas in their province are in distress. Our thanks, therefore, are all the more sincere. We hope that his province will soon be out of the woods and will continue to help us in a still more plentiful measure.

The Premier of the Punjab and the Food Minister of the Punjab have both of them appealed to their people not to keep back their stocks while others are starving but to allow it to flow into Bengal. We are grateful to

them and we trust that their appeals will be responded to. There has been a general searching of stocks in the various surplus provinces and States and there is every hope that more and more stocks will be declared, and the major portion of it will be assigned to Bengal. Bihar and the United Provinces have agreed to send us more gram and *dal*. We are in touch with other provinces too for gram, *dal* and groundnuts. The Government of India, as I have already stated above, are taking every possible steps to assure us more foodgrains and to transport what is already available, and I have it on the best authority to state that imports from foreign lands are also on the way. I have done whatsoever I could during the very short time that we have been functioning. We have had a terrible legacy to cope with and if I have been of any service to the people of Bengal and if my efforts have helped at all to alleviate the distress, I can, with some confidence, claim that I have done my duty. (Loud applause from the Ministerial benches.)

GOVERNMENT BILL.

The Bengal Vagrancy Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Vagrancy Bill, 1943, be taken into consideration.

Sir, I do not like to take up the time of the House by a long speech, because this Bill has been before the public for a long time. It was published in the *Calcutta Gazette* and it was introduced before. The provisions of the Bill are very few, and it is not a controversial Bill. I hope that this Bill will have the support of all sections of the public. There is a provision for detention; there is a provision for management and discipline, and there is a provision for punishment. These are all the provisions, and I move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

The motion of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad that the Bengal Vagrancy Bill, 1943, be taken into consideration, was then put and agreed to.

Clause 1.

The question that clause 1 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 2.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Chaudhuri, I think your amendment is not in order.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Why not, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: You have proposed that for the words "prescribed purpose" the words "authorised by an institution" be substituted. There is a technical mistake; it should be "for a prescribed purpose".

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: I have corrected that. I have already sent a notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: You want to move your amendment?

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one thing that I should like to point out in order to save time. The word "institution" has not been defined in the Bill.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, I shall move my amendment with a brief speech. I beg to move that in clause 2(*9*), in line 7, for the words "for a prescribed purpose" the words "authorised by an institution" be substituted.

Sir, the Bill is named the Bengal Vagrancy Bill, 1943, and it is important to define the word "vagrant" as exactly as possible. Much of the provisions of the Bill has been taken from an old Act, namely, the European Vagrancy Act of 1824, but I cannot understand why the definition of "vagrant" has not been taken bodily from that Act. Sir, in that Act, "vagrant" is defined as "a person of European extraction found asking for alms or wandering abroad without any employment or visible means of subsistence". That is the simple definition of "vagrant" in the European Vagrancy Act. Why the definition is going to be expanded so far as this Bill is concerned, I cannot understand. Not only that, but certain persons are being excepted from the category of vagrants and, Sir, it is stated in the definition that a "vagrant" does not include a person collecting money or asking for food or gifts for a prescribed purpose. Sir, here is a proposal to legislate behind the back of the Legislature. I want to prevent that. Therefore I want to substitute for the words "for a prescribed purpose" the words "authorised by an institution". Institution is a word of common use and does not in my opinion require a definition.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I oppose this for this very reason that it has got no meaning. The word "institution" has not been defined. There are many institutions. To quote my honourable friend Mr. Siddiqi there are institutions prostituted illegally in the name of institutions. So, I cannot accep this amendment. On the other hand, the word "prescribed" has been defined in clause 6 of section 2. That means "prescribed by rules made under this Act". For this simple reason, I cannot accept this amendment which has got no meaning.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri that in clause 2(*9*), in line 7, for the words "for a prescribed purpose" the words "authorised by an institution" be substituted, was then put and lost.

The question that clause 2 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 3.

Mr. SPEAKER: Both the amendments of Mr. Adwaita Kumar Maji are out of order.

The question that clause 3 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5.

The question that clauses 4 and 5 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 6.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the only purpose for which I want to move this amendment is to invite the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the procedure of taking a person to the Magistrate. If he looks into my amendment and feels that there is anything in it, he may accept the same. Otherwise I would not mind if it is not accepted. I formally move that in clause 6, in lines 4 and 5, for the words "to accompany him or any other Police Officer to and to appear" the words "to place him under arrest and at the earliest opportunity to produce him" be substituted.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: For the information of Dr. Sanyal I may say that a Police Officer authorised may require any person who is apparently a vagrant to accompany him or any other Police Officer only to appear as early as possible before a Special Magistrate when he is in court. Sir, you may take it that this clause is not on the same lines as in the Criminal Procedure Code. Therefore, I do not see any reason for accepting Dr. Sanyal's amendment. Sir, I oppose it.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in clause 6, in lines 4 and 5, for the words "to accompany him or any other Police Officer to and to appear" the words "to place him under arrest and at the earliest opportunity to produce him" be substituted was then put and lost.

The question that clause 6 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 7.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that in clause 7, after sub-clause (*3*) the following new sub-clause be added, namely:—

"(*4*) A person declared to be a vagrant under sub-section (*1*) of section 7 may apply for a revision of the declaration or may appeal to have it set aside in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Criminal Procedure Code, as if the declaration was an order under section 118 of the said Code".

Sir, you will find that once a person is taken to a Magistrate and is declared to be a vagrant there is almost an end of him. He has got to go almost to a jail and remain there for such a length of time as it suits the pleasure of the Controller of Vagrancy. There is every likelihood of such a provision being prostituted for political purposes and therefore persons who are hauled up and declared as vagrants should have a right to question that declaration in a law court. Sir, you are aware that under section 109 of the Criminal Procedure Code (security section) a person may be asked to offer security for good behaviour if he is found to be a vagrant and the order that is made as regards security is made under section 118 of the said Code. That order is appealable under section 405, if I remember aright, of the

Code. Therefore, I propose that here also the person who is declared to be vagrant should have an opportunity to question the declaration that is made about him. I have suggested in my amendment that he should have the right to appeal to the proper court for setting aside that declaration. It is a safeguard that is absolutely necessary in the conditions that prevail in this country.

With these words, Sir, I propose that the amendment be accepted.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I oppose the amendment on the simple ground that the legal procedure in the matter of removal of vagrants from Calcutta and other centres of Bengal should be made as easy as possible. We should not in any manner open a new source of revenue for the legal profession. I stressed this point in the Committee over which the Hon'ble Minister of the day had presided. Let us get rid of these people and if there is any aggrieved party it may be possible for him to prove himself to be a useful citizen and member of society and thus get out of the clutches——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, these interruptions I cannot stand. I seek your protection.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If you cannot stand these interruptions, you had better go out.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, this side of the House also deserves your kind consideration.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Of course.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I cannot stand such interruptions. I am not such a clever man as the Doctor is, and my argument becomes disturbed. I am talking about a matter of which I have made some study. It is not a controversial point. There is no difference of opinion anywhere. But, Sir, I once cited the old Persian saying:—

نیش عقرب نہ از پئے کین است * مقتضائے طبیعتش این است

The honourable member for the municipalities of the district of Murshidabad interferes because it has become a part of his habit in this Assembly to become a nuisance. I earnestly appeal to you, Sir, to use your power and to save us from these interruptions. I would appeal to the mover of the amendment to withdraw it because the idea when this Bill was drafted was to make the procedure as easy as possible.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, I did not catch you, but did you use the expression that he had proved himself to be a nuisance?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Whatever words I have used will be on record. If there is any apology you seek, I offer one hundred apologies. But for God's sake save the House, save the dignity of the House because we are not allowed even to listen to speeches. These disturbances, Sir, have become intolerable.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, I take it that you have withdrawn the expression.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Thousand apologies and two thousand withdrawals. But for God's sake save us!—

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I shall not emulate the manners of my esteemed friend Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi. His method of offending people and expressing regret when an apology is demanded, is well known. It begins from the proverbial——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not proceed further in that direction.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Attempts to besmirch some respectable member of this House on a previous occasion, to whom he had to apologise subsequently. I would only like to remind this House through you and if that would open the legal brain of a first class product of the Aligarh University that a provision similar to the one proposed by Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri does actually occur in the English Vagrancy Act. Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi would neither have the patience nor probably the intelligence to understand it because it would not touch him. He always gets up and abuses others when there is the slightest interruption. He does not even care to read law or even to apply his mind to important questions of principle.

Sir, here is a matter of great public importance. We have seen how the powers that often abuse any authority that is vested in them: we have seen how under the present law, sections 109 and 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code have been most recklessly applied on the political workers just on the plea that they have been found loitering, and they have been called vagrants. It is only fair and reasonable that an opportunity should be provided in the Act itself to the person who is declared to be a vagrant to seek some remedy in case he feels aggrieved by such an order. The British Act—the English Vagrancy Act of 1824—provides in section 9 as follows:—

"When any Justice as aforesaid shall commit any such incorrigible Rogue to the House of Correction, there to remain till the next General or Quarter Sessions, or when any such idle and disorderly Person, Rogue and Vagabond, or incorrigible Rogue, shall give Notice of his or her Intention to appeal against the Conviction of him or her, and shall enter into recognizance as hereinafter directed to prosecute such Appeal, such Justice shall require the Person by whom such Offender shall be apprehended, and the Person or Persons whose Evidence shall appear to him to be material to prove the offence and to support such Conviction, to become bound in Recognizance to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, to appear at the said General or Quarter Sessions, to give evidence against such Offender", etc., etc.

Sir, personal liberty is a matter of much graver concern to the Britisher than to an Indian, and I am surprised that one, of the position of Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi who sometimes at least alleges or professes to

be a great protagonist of civil liberty, would forget himself so much as to get up and oppose the salutary measure that is sought to be introduced by my friend Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I really sympathise with my friend Dr. Sanyal and the mover in their anxieties to safeguard that these powers are not abused, but I would respectfully remind them a provision of this kind under the Vagrancy Act would not be feasible, for by the time the judicial officer who sits on appeal gets seisin of the case the evidence would be gone because it would be very difficult at that time to prove vagrancy.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If he ceases to be a vagrant, why should you not release him?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I am coming to that. For that look up to section 18.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: That is a "discharge" section.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Will you please hear me? There is provision for the appointment of a Controller to effect discharge as soon as it is found that the vagrant has improved his condition. This is not a case under section 109 which deals with a man who conceals his presence with regard to his suspicious movement. Here there is no likelihood of this power being abused. On the other hand, this is a salutary remedy for the protection of the vagrants. But if the power is at all abused the vagrant can at once go to the civil court under section 42 of Specific Relief Act, if he likes to seek remedy.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But the Act stands in the way.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: No, it does not. For these reasons, Sir, I cannot accept this amendment.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: *Habaes Corpus* is the only possible remedy.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri that in clause 7, after sub-clause (*3*), the following new sub-clause be added, namely:—

> "(*4*) A person declared to be a vagrant under sub-section (*1*) of section 7 may apply for a revision of the declaration or may appeal to have it set aside in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Criminal Procedure Code, as if the declaration was an order under section 118 of the said Code",

was then put and lost.

The question that clause 7 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 8.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that in clause 8, after sub-clause (*2*), the following proviso be inserted, namely:—

"Provided that a female vagrant shall be examined by a female medical officer only."

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, this has been provided for under section 14, under a proviso, namely, that a female vagrant shall be searched by a female only and with due regard to decency. So there is no need of this amendment.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri that in clause 8, after sub-clause (*2*), the following proviso be inserted, namely:—

"Provided that a female vagrant shall be examined by a female medical officer only"

was then put and lost.

The question that clause 8 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to

Clause 9.

The question that clause 9 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 10.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that in clause 10, in sub-clause (*1*), in line 5, for the words "the area in which this Act is in force" the word "Bengal" be substituted.

Sir, the subsequent motions (Nos. 8 and 9) are ancillary motions, and I also move them formally, viz., that in clause 10, in sub-clause (*1*), in line 9, for the words "the said area" the word "Bengal" be substituted; and that in clause 10, in sub-clause (*1*), in line 11, for the word "thereto" the words "to Bengal" be substituted.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I cannot accept them.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri that in clause 10, in sub-clause (*1*), in line 5, for the words "the area in which this Act is in force" the word "Bengal" be substituted, was then put and lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: The other two motions (Nos. 8 and 9) being consequential fall through.

The question that clause 10 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 17.

Mr. SPEAKER: Amendment No. 10 is consequential and therefore falls through.

The question that clauses 11 to 17 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 18.

Rai HARENDRA CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that in clause 18, in line 2 of paragraph (*b*) of sub-clause (*1*), after the word "has" the following words be inserted, namely:—

"been sufficiently trained or".

Sir, clause 18 gives the ground for the discharge of vagrants. Now, sub-clause (*b*) states, "on its being shown to the satisfaction of the Controller that such vagrant has become possessed of an income sufficient to enable him to support himself without resorting to vagrancy". I propose to insert after the word "has" the words "been sufficiently trained or". What I mean is that when a vagrant has been sufficiently trained for earning his livelihood, that ought to be a ground also for his discharge.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I cannot accept the amendment as it stands. The expression "sufficiently trained" has no meaning. On the other hand, the provision that we have made "possessed of an income sufficient to enable him to support himself without resorting to vagrancy" is quite adequate. If we accept the amendment, then the vagrant will resort to begging again.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, I beg to move that in clause 18, sub-clause (*2*) be omitted.

Sir, sub-clause (*2*) runs as follows: "When the employment referred to in clause (*a*) of sub-section (*1*) has been obtained for a vagrant, any such vagrant refusing or neglecting to avail himself thereof shall be liable to be punished on conviction before a Magistrate, with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month."

Sir, why must a vagrant be compelled to accept an employment chosen by another person for him? He may, if satisfied, voluntarily accept that employment. If he is compelled to accept an employment chosen by another for him, this will be sheer *zabardasti* and nothing else. For, if a vagrant does not accept an employment, under the said provision that will be an offence, and what will be the result? He will be convicted for the offence and sent to prison. But apart from inflicting an undeserved punishment it will not improve matters otherwise, for after coming back from prison if he does not accept that very employment, what will be the case? He will again be hauled up before the Magistrate and will again be declared a vagrant and will again have to come back to the house of detention. Even after suffering imprisonment if he can be ordered to go to the house of detention, why cannot he remain in the house of detention after refusing to accept that employment I cannot for myself understand. It is coercion pure and simple that a person should be forced to accept an employment chosen by another.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I do not understand the logic of my friend's argument. Without this

provision clause 2 of the Act will be meaningless. Here it is checking and correcting him. It is in his own interest that there should be punishment, otherwise the whole Act becomes nugatory. So, I cannot accept the amendment.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri that in clause 18, in line 2 of paragraph (*b*) of sub-clause (*1*), after the word "has" the following words be inserted, namely:—

"been sufficiently trained or"

was then put and lost.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri that in clause 18, sub-clause (*2*) be omitted, was then put and lost.

The question that clause 18 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clause 19.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I formally move my motions Nos. 13 to 17, namely—

that in clause 19, in line 1, the words "or causes" be omitted;
that in clause 19, in line 2, the words "or the causing" be omitted;
that in clause 19, in line 4, the words "connives at or" be omitted;
that in clause 19, in lines 4 and 5, the words "or the causing" be omitted;
that in clause 19, in line 7, for the words "two years" the words "six months" be substituted.

Sir, the object of these motions is to minimise the rigours proposed in the penalty clause—clause 19. The Hon'ble Minister will notice that two years' punishment has been provided and a fine in addition to that for certain offences, the wording of which leaves much scope for abuse. It is stated that "Whoever employs or causes any person to ask for alms, or abets the employment or the causing of a person to ask for alms, or whoever, having the custody, charge, or care of a child, connives at or encourages the employment or the causing of a child to ask for alms shall be liable to be punished on conviction before a Magistrate with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine or with both".

Sir, I consider the punishment to be too hard and again some of the words might lead to abuse. Therefore, Sir, I have sought to remove some of those words and reduce the punishment to six months' rigorous imprisonment only.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, I am again surprised for, the fact is that there are rascals in this city of ours who have formed companies and who send women with suckling babes and children to go and beg for them. Sir, they maim children, they break their arms and legs. Two years is too little. I thought that the generosity of the honourable member would lead him to put it at 10 years. The amendment, Sir, I think should be rejected by the House.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I think the answer has been provided by Mr. Siddiqi. We must punish a man who tries to earn through begging by somebody else——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: For conniving at begging?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, if you choose the word "conniving" I can accept it, but there is the expression "the causing of a child to ask for alms", and the amendment does not improve the thing. So, I do not accept the amendments.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But there is the word "connives". Sir, my friend says that he is prepared to accept my amendment to omit the words "connives at".

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I have heard him. He has not accepted your amendments.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in clause 19, in line 1, the words "or causes" be omitted was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in clause 19, in line 2, the words "or the causing" be omitted was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in clause 19, in line 4, the words "connives at or" be omitted was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in clause 19, in lines 4 and 5, the words "or the causing" be omitted was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that in clause 19, in line 7, for the words "two years" the words "six months" be substituted was then put and lost.

The question that clause 19 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 28.

The question that clauses 20 to 28 stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

New Clause 29.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that after clause 28 the following new clause be added, namely:—

"29. Any rules made or anything done or any action taken or any proceedings commenced in exercise of any power conferred by or under the Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance, 1943, shall, on the said Ordinance ceasing to be in operation, be deemed to have been made, done, taken or commenced in exercise of powers conferred by or under this Act as if this Act had commenced on the 30th day of July, 1943."

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: As the time at our disposal is short, we have only to point out that this clause seeks to give retrospective effect to an enactment which has not yet been passed and it opens a very serious

question of principle, and we object on the ground that to give retrospective effect to a criminal piece of legislation is entirely wrong. This has been found in connection with another criminal procedure which was contested in the Calcutta High Court sometime ago. The Judges of the High Court did mention that it is entirely irregular and wrong to seek to make an act criminal with retrospective effect.

With these words, Sir, I object to retrospective effect being given to a piece of legislation which is not already there.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Dr. Sanyal forgets that this Bill is exactly on the lines of the Ordinance. Something like 800 vagrants have been dealt with under the Ordinance This clause is only for the continuance of the purpose of the Ordinance.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Therefore it is unnecessary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

The motion of Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmed that after clause 28 the following new clause be added, namely:—

"29. Any rules made or anything done or any action taken or any proceedings commenced in exercise of any power conferred by or under the Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance, 1943, shall, on the said Ordinance ceasing to be in operation, be deemed to have been made, done, taken or commenced in exercise of powers conferred by or under this Act as if this Act had commenced on the 30th day of July, 1943."

was then put and agreed to.

Preamble.

The question that the preamble stand part of the Bill was then put and agreed to.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Vagrancy Bill, 1943, as settled in the Assembly, be passed.

The motion was then put and agreed to.

The Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, I beg to introduce the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill, 1943.

(Secretary then read the short title of the Bill.)

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6-15 p.m. till 2-15 p.m. on Thursday, the 16th September, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 16th September, 1943, at 2-15 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 187 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Retirement of Mr. Blair.

*30. **Rai Bahadur JOGESH CHANDRA SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the present Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal has submitted his resignation;

(*ii*) if so, when and under what circumstances;

(*iii*) whether his resignation has been accepted; and

(*iv*) if so, when?

(*b*) If the resignation has not been accepted, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) In a letter, dated the 18th January, 1943, Mr. Blair enquired whether he would be permitted to retire for personal reasons on the expiry of the leave due to him.

(*iii*), (*iv*) and (*b*) The Povincial Government were informed about the end of July that Mr. Blair's retirement on the expiry of such leave as might be allowed to him had been sanctioned by the Secretary of State.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a private letter of Mr. Blair was intercepted somewhere and that was the reason for his resignation?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have it on the authority of Mr. Blair that he is not aware of it and that he knows nothing about it.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he is aware that it is commonly believed that Mr. Blair resigned because he felt obstructed in the discharge of his duties as Chief Secretary?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: May I draw the honourable member's attention to the fact that he submitted his letter sometime in January, 1943, and I do not know what took place then.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the letter referred to dated the 18th January, 1943, contained any suggestion by Mr. Blair complaining that he as Chief Secretary was being ignored in matters relating to civil supplies by the powers that be and that things were being managed without his knowledge and sometimes he was being informed after the events were completed by the then Cabinet?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as I am aware that is not correct.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he is aware that a letter written by Mr. Blair to his people at home was ever intercepted which contained allegations against the present administration?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the contents of the letter dated the 18th January, 1943, other than what is referred to in the answer?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have not got that letter with me and therefore I cannot say.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the present position regarding the retirement of Mr. Blair? Is it a fact that he has been or is being approached by the present head of the executive to continue in office and to assist him in the discharge of his responsibility in this province during this critical period?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Mr. Blair is leaving on Saturday by the Bombay Mail.

Increase in dietary allowance of security prisoners.

***31. Sj. KHAGENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the security prisoners of different jails in the Province have recently sent petitions to Government praying for increase in the amount of their dietary allowance?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether their prayers for increase in the dietary allowance have been granted;

(*ii*) if so, to what extent; and

(*iii*) if not, the reasons therefor?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The rate of their diet allowance has since been increased by 100 per cent.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when has this cent. per cent. increase been given effect to?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In June this year, after the assumption of office by this Ministry.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DUTTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the prices of foodstuffs have not gone up by 400 per cent.?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In some cases prices have increased considerably but not in the cases of all foodstuffs.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any scale in respect of articles of diet fixed for the security prisoners?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I want notice.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether even after the cent. per cent. increase the prisoners take their diet at the same scale at which they used to take their diet?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Previously the rate was 12 annas; it has been increased to Rs. 1-8. Therefore I say it has been doubled.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the effect of the cent. per cent. increase does not amount to much considering the scale of diet and the prices of foodstuffs?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I want notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: যে প্রশ্নে আমাদের Parliamentary Secretary মহাশয় notice চেয়েছেন, মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয় উত্তর দিলে তার notice চাইতেন না। Dietary Scale is there. তা Hon'ble Minister জানেন।

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: আমার এটা question নয়। আমি এটা নিবেদন করছি।

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Government be pleased to state if the dietary scale has been in any way improved or if there has been any deterioration thereof even though there might have been an increase in the monetary allowance provided for such a scale, the price of commodities having risen much more than 100 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am not answering the question. I am just explaining that the object of doubling the dietary allowance is not to give a better scale but to maintain the same scale.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that even now prisoners are taking their diet only as per scale? The increase does not help them.

(No answer.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Government in a position to ensure or state that the previous dietary scale is fully maintained?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That is what you have from the honourable member.

MR. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that the Dacca Central Jail is supplying rice to security prisoners at higher rates in violation of the Bengal Foodgrains Control Order, 1943?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I want notice in writing.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: I will bring it up by means of a cut motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the best course would be that when a question is answered by a Parliamentary Secretary he should answer the whole of it: some part being answered by the Minister in charge and some part by the Parliamentary Secretary creates inconvenience and is somewhat irregular. Therefore I direct that henceforth when a Parliamentary Secretary answers, he will answer the whole of it.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the price of sugar is charged at 14 annas in the Alipore Central Jail whereas the controlled price is 6 annas 9 pies?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Withholding of letters of security prisoners by Special Branch.

*32. **Mr. NIHARENDU DUTT-MAZUMDAR:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that a letter, dated the 18th December, 1942, addressed by Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A., to Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas, M.L.A., regarding a T.B. patient in the Presidency Jail was withheld by Special Branch;

(*ii*) that the information of such withholding was communicated by Special Branch to the Jail authorities on 15th January, 1943;

(*iii*) that Mr. Kundu was informed of this on 25th January, 1943;

(*iv*) that no reasons were stated by the Special Branch authorities for withholding the correspondence; and

(*v*) that Mr. Kundu's letters, dated the 10th November, and 21st December, 1942, addressed to the Deputy Commissioner, Special Branch, making enquiries about the above state of affairs have failed to elicit any acknowledgment or reply?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of enquiring into the matter and ascertaining the reasons thereof?

(c) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he is contemplating for preventing—

(i) undue delay in communicating the information of withholding letters; and

(ii) withholding such letters against the provisions of rules?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (a) (i) and (ii) Yes.

(iii) to (v) and (b) On enquiry I have come to know that Mr. Kundu was verbally informed by the Jail Superintendent of the withholding of the letter as also the reasons therefor.

(c) (i) I have issued orders to deal with these things as expeditiously as possible.

(ii) I am satisfied that the letter in question was not withheld against the provisions of the rules.

Point of Order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The answer is so worded that it is impossible to accept this answer from anybody other than the Hon'ble Minister in charge. It relates to a very important privilege of members in jail and, Sir, it would not be fair either to this House or to members who are in jail to permit Parliamentary Secretaries who have no responsibility in the administration of Government to allow such an answer to be given, if the Hon'ble Minister in charge means that the first person singular number that is used here refers to Government, then that is entirely a different matter and in that case the satisfaction of Government will have to be taken as the satisfaction of the Secretary in charge. But when the first person singular number nominative is used, one has to presume that the Hon'ble Minister in charge is personally satisfied, and if he does not give us the reply it would be difficult for us to accept the reply from the Parliamentary Secretary, unless he states that the Hon'ble Minister has had the satisfaction.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you perhaps remember that yesterday or the day before yesterday this question was considered and I said that the rules required some amendments. I have allowed questions to be answered by a Parliamentary Secretary as I had held that anybody who is authorised to answer a question is supposed to be a Minister: for the purpose of answering a question he is a Minister. Therefore I have allowed it. Let this continue for the time being. I will soon consult the leaders of all parties and then evolve a rule which will remove this difficulty.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: But, Sir, until such time it will be better for the Parliamentary Secretary to refer to the answer in a different form, namely, for "I am satisfied" he may say "the Hon'ble Minister in charge is satisfied".

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of order, Sir. What you have said is correct, but in my opinion there is no anomaly, for when a Parliamentary Secretary replies to a question he is just the same as a Minister and this "I" will equally apply to him as well as to me because he sees the files and when he answers he has the responsibility to do so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He does not.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Of course, he does: the files are with him. I have not seen the files myself. I take this opportunity to remove a misapprehension in the minds of the members that a Parliamentary Secretary in answering questions does not see the files, at all. This is absolutely incorrect. All papers which the Parliamentary Secretaries have to deal with in connection with the Legislature are given to them—the complete file: they make queries in connection with the answers and get themselves satisfied, and in some cases if there is any difficulty they bring it up to the notice of the Minister concerned. In any case files do go to the Parliamentary Secretaries as far as the work in the Legislature is concerned, especially files dealing with questions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may we know if this "I" refers to the Parliamentary Secretary and not to the Minister?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If I had answered, it would have been myself, but when the Parliamentary Secretary answers the question it is the Parliamentary Secretary.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Then, this "I" does not refer to the Minister in charge?

Mr. SPEAKER: I see there is some anomaly: there is no doubt about it. It is desirable that the whole thing should be cleared up and the rules amended accordingly. Here "I" stands in the name of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin and some body else stands up and answers the question. One who knows nothing about it will think that the person replying is Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin. (Laughter.) There are other difficulties which are likely to arise. Therefore we have got to remove all these difficulties by suitable amendment of the rules. I will try to do that in a short time and I hope that amendment will soon take effect.

Supplementaries to starred question No. 32.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us under what rules or provisions of the Security Prisoners Rules the letter was withheld?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Under the Security Prisoners Rules it is not permissible for a prisoner to refer to the condition of any other prisoner; therefore, the letter was withheld.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: What is the exact rule?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I want notice.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: With reference to (*iii*) to (*v*) and (*b*), I beg to state that the Superintendent made a false statement that Mr. Kundu was verbally informed. Question No. (*a*)(*iii*) definitely states that I was informed on the 25th January, 1943.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Kundu, I have allowed you to make that statement, but that does not arise out of the question.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In view of the statement just made by my honourable friend, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of changing the reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer given by the Parliamentary Secretary to Mr. Kundu that under the Security Prisoners Rules reference to any other prisoner in letters is not permissible and that the letter is withheld, may we enquire if it is not possible as in the case of a letter addressed to me by Kali Narayan Sanyal the reference to other names could be deleted and the letter passed on?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: In this case it could also have been made, had it been a passing reference. If a reference runs through a whole page it is not possible to delete the whole of it. Therefore, the letter was withheld.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether a member of the Legislature when he is detained as a security prisoner retains some of the privileges of a member?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise out of the main question.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: This letter was written by Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu as a security prisoner and also as a member of the Legislative Assembly. According to the rules members of this House ratain some of the privileges even as security prisoners. I wrote a letter to the then Government Whip or Parliamentary Secretary—I do not remember, to whom—and then, Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: My question is whether he, being a member, retains some of the privileges of a member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have understood but you have not been able to put the question properly. If any privileges have been interfered with, then you can put it in the proper way.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: I take for granted that privilege is retained. I wanted the reply first whether he is aware that some privileges are retained by him.

Mr. SPEAKER: You want to know whether there is a privilege and then you want to put another question. This is by way of cross-examination and it is too remote.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether by withholding a letter of a member of this House who was a security prisoner, the privilege of such a member which is retained has been interefered with?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he will believe me when I say that I received similar letters from other prisoners regarding a T.B. patient security prisoner? If so, will the Hon'ble Minister please state why differential treatment was meted out to Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu with regard to this matter?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Government is not aware of any such differential treatment.

Dacca riots and casualties.

*33. **Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total number of casualties—

(1) Hindus, and

(2) Muslims,

as a result of the recent stabbing incidents at Dacca in June, 1943;

(*ii*) the reason for this recrudescence of communal troubles there; and

(*iii*) the steps taken so far to prevent any recurrence of such communal crimes?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the Dacca Riots Enquiry Committee completed its report already?

(*c*) Do the Government consider the desirability of circulating the report to the public as early as possible?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*).

(*i*) (1) Hindus—14.

(2) Muslims—17.

(*ii*) The reason has not yet been ascertained.

(*iii*) Steps taken so far include promulgation of an order under 144, Criminal Procedure Code; closing of restaurants and excise shops; imposition of collective fines; and posting of armed pickets and Civic Guards.

(*b*) Yes.

(c) The report was made available some months ago as a priced publication.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In answer to (a) (ii), it is stated that the reason has not yet been ascertained. Do Government expect that the reason will ever be ascertained?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: It might be.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: When?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: It cannot be stated when.

Grant of compensation to mother and step-mother of Manindra Das of Tippera.

*34. **Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA:** (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(i) whether any compensation has been given to the mother and step-mother of the deceased Manindra Das of village Budhair, police-station Burichang, district Tippera, who was shot dead by one Fusilier J. Baines at the Mainamati Military Camp; and

(ii) if so, what amount?

(b) If no compensation has been granted, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(c) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the said Manindra Das was the only earning member of the family?

(d) Do the Government consider the desirability of granting the mother and the step-mother a monthly allowance during their life-time in view of the abnormal rise in the price of food crops?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (a) (i) Yes.

(ii) Rs.250.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) I am informed that this is not a fact.

(d) No.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us on what basis the amount of compensation was determined?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: There was no basis actually but the District Magistrate sanctioned Rs. 250.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us what is the source of information as regards (c)—that it is not a fact that the said Manindra Das was the only earning member of the family?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: District Officer of Government.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us who are the other earning members of the family?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I want notice.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us if he is prepared to accept my version that there is no other earning member of the family?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: That is a hypothetical question.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us if Rs. 250 has been granted as a lump compensation for the person killed?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, it is a lump compensation.

Stipends to Scheduled Caste students of the Burdwan district.

*35. **Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department aware that the Scheduled Caste students of the Burdwan district, are not getting their stipends regularly from the Scheduled Caste Education Fund?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it sometimes happens that students do not get their stipends though the year expires?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: No, Sir, that is not my information.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell us if the students regularly get their stipends?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN Khan: Yes.

Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় বলবেন কি গত বছরে কতগুলি ছাত্রের এবং কোন সময় stipendএর ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছিল।

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: 38 school students received stipends last year.

Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI: কোন সময়ে? this year or last year?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The question does not refer to this year.

Mr. SPEAKER: He wants to know the time when it was given.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: For that I want notice.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Bengal Supervision of Orphanage and Widows' Home Bill, 1940.

18. Maulvi M. FARHAD RAZA CHOWDHURY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether any meetings of the Select Committee of the Bengal Supervision of Orphanage and Widows' Home Bill, 1940, by Begum Farhat Bano Khanam have been called?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of—

(*i*) expediting the deliberations of the Committee, and

(*ii*) presenting the report before the expiry of the life of this House?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) and (*b*) Only one meeting was held on 28th May, 1941. It was not possible to hold subsequent meetings mainly because the late Hon'ble Minister for Education, being a member of the Upper House, could not be the Chairman of the Committee.

(*c*) Yes.

Girls' schools with number of students.

19. Maulvi IDRIS AHMED MIA: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the names of the recognised—

(1) girls' high schools, and

(2) girls' middle English schools,

with their addresses at present existing in each district;

(*ii*) the total number of—

(1) Muslim girls,

(2) Caste Hindu girls,

(3) Scheduled Caste girls,

(4) Christian girls, and

(5) girls belonging to other caste or creed reading in the above schools; and

(*iii*) the number of them that passed the Middle English and the Matriculation Examinations from the schools referred to in (*i*) in the year 1940?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: A statement furnishing the required particulars is laid on the Library Table.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: With reference to (*i*)(1) and (2), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of the girls' high schools and girls' middle English schools are granted Government aid and how many are not?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN Khan: This question only asks for statistics. It is difficult to say about Government aid in a question like this.

Appointment of mechanics in the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca.

20. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of mechanics that have been appointed during the last 5 years in the workshop of the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca;

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Muslims;

(2) Caste Hindus; and

(3) Scheduled Castes; and

(*iii*) whether Communal Ratio Rules were observed in making the appointment?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) 15.

(*ii*) (1) 13 Muslims,

(2) 1 Caste Hindu, and

(3) 1 Scheduled Caste.

(*iii*) No.

(*b*) The Principal has been instructed to follow the rules in future and to adjust the disparity when filling up future vacancies.

Dearness allowance to low-paid Government servants.

21. Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to consider the desirability of paying in proportion to the rise in the cost of living, dearness allowance to the low-paid employees of Government and at the rate in which the railwaymen are being paid?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami): At this date I am not prepared to consider changing the form in which the dearness concessions sanctioned by this Government have been granted.

GOVERNMENT BILL.

The Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill, 1943.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill, 1943, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) Maulvi Abdul Latif Biswas, M.L.A.,

(2) Maulvi Abul Hashim, M.L.A.,

(3) Kazi Emdadul Haque, M.L.A.,

(4) Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz, M.L.A.,

(5) Maulvi Ahmed Ali Mridha, M.L.A.,

(6) the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea, M.B.E., M.L.A.,

(7) Maharajadhiraja Uday Chand Mahtab Bahadur, M.L.A., of Burdwan,

(8) Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri, M.L.A.,

(9) Mr. Shahedali, M.L.A.,

(10) Mr. C. W. Miles, M.L.A.,

(11) Mr. H. R. Hodge, M.L.A.,

(12) Babu Shyama Prosad Barman, M.L.A.,

(13) Babu Kshetra Nath Singha, M.L.A., and

(14) myself,

with instructions to submit their report by the 20th November, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five.

Sir, in ordinary circumstances, whether in office or in opposition, I would not have countenanced rushing a measure of this kind through the Legislature. (Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Is it then under compulsion?) It is under extraordinary circumstances that the progress of a Bill which may legitimately be considered controversial by some people has got to be speeded up this session. As I have told you, our budget deficit for to the extent of over Rs. 14 crores at the end of the financial year. Now, Sir, many responsible people hold that since the entry of Japan into the war, conditions in this province have been so abnormal and have thrown on us a burden so completely beyond the resources of the province—so completely beyond the resources placed at the disposal of the Government of Bengal by the Niemeyer Award—that we can legitimately look to the Centre for assistance by way of an outright subvention. Sir, I should like to say that I personally share that view, and I may give you this assurance that I shall spare no pains to press that view at the appropriate time. The deficit for the current year is about 7 crores and a half. And I have also asked you to remember that we are likely to be indebted to the Government of India to the extent of 14 crores at the end of the year. But in the meantime we have to fall back on our own resources to fill the gap as far as possible by our own efforts. I regret very much that I have to introduce taxation measure at this time; but let us also remember,

that supposing the Government of India were to make a subvention equal to half of our debt, even then, the proceeds of the tax, the agricultural income-tax, should, I think, according to my calculation, be required perhaps for 20 years to pay off the remainder. The fact is that we *have* to tap our resources.

There is a considerable concensus of opinion in favour of an agricultural income-tax. Almost all our Indian economists support the imposition of an agricultural income-tax and regard it as equitable. Then let us take the Indian Taxation Committee of 1924-25. They recommended by a majority the imposition of an agricultural income-tax; and lastly, the Floud Commission also recommended the imposition of income-tax on agricultural incomes. (Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: An *ad interim* measure.) Sir, I quite realise that what the Floud Commission had in mind was that the proceeds of the tax should be devoted to the development of agriculture. In other words, the agricultural income-tax would in that case be a kind of compulsory investment. But situated as we are today and as we are likely to be for some time to come, it would be impossible to earmark the proceeds of the agricultural income-tax for a particular purpose. The times are abnormal. We want money to save the nation and we cannot proceed on lines which are ordinarily recommended to us by the canons of taxation.

Sir, there are some other matters I would like to refer to in this connection. The question is: Is it just to levy income-tax on agricultural incomes? We have, Sir, the decision of the Privy Council in Raja Prabhat Chandra Barua's case where their Lordships of the Privy Council said that they were unable to find in the Regulation, that is to say, Regulation I of 1793, any statement or assurance that a zemindar will never be liable to taxation in respect of the income derived from the *zemindari*. Secondly, Sir, two provinces, under Congress administration, imposed agricultural income-tax—Bihar and Assam. And with regard to the imposition of agricultural income-tax in Bihar I have before me Jhalak Prosad's case in which it was decided that the Agricultural Income-tax Act of Bihar was not *ultra vires* of the Legislature of Bihar. Sir, agricultural income was not exempted from the general income-tax which was imposed in 1860 and we have the opinion, which is recorded, of the then Maharaja Bahadur of Burdwan in support of an income-tax on agricultural income. I have, Sir, to finish my speech in a few minutes, because we have very little time today. I shall not go into the question of infringement of Permanent Settlement. I have always felt that there was no such sanctity about the Permanent Settlement as would preclude us from overriding it when the general interests of the country demanded that one should do so. Sir, I do not accept Machiavelli's maxim: "The promise given was a necessity of the past, the word broken is a necessity of the present". But I do feel that the growing intricacy of our financial and social problems have brought many new factors into the picture necessitating elasticity of public revenue and expenditure. However galling the agricultural income-tax may be to the landholding community, I hope in the interests of the

province as a whole, this House will support my motion for reference of this Bill to a Select Committee. I know there may be imperfections in the drafting of the Bill. Those imperfections can be cured in the Select Committee. Therefore, at this stage I shall be very brief in my observations. I have my eye on the clock, Sir, just as you have yours, and I shall not detain the House any longer at this stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I call on the amendments on the agenda I think it may be possible with your co-operation to economise time. I find that there are as many as 10 amendments for circulation. It would be better if one of the motions be moved and a few speeches made by selected representatives of different groups. If you agree I would divide this motion into two parts. The first will be that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon leaving out the time. If this is rejected it would not be necessary to put the other part about time. I think that that would be desirable.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: That is the practice of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case who should speak first? Dr. Sanyal's name stands first. If you agree he may speak first.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am at your command.

Mr. SPEAKER: You may speak.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion thereon by the 31st July, 1944.

Sir, when the whole country has been looking forward to measures of amelioration particularly in view of the serious situation created through shortage of food and essentials of life the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Finance, high finance I should say, has given us a surprise in the form of a fresh measure of taxation and this surprise has quickly followed in the wake of a still greater surprise, for which full credit must be given to him with his tradition, that the Province of Bengal has been thrown into a deficit of about Rs. 7½ crores in the course of two short years.

We, on this side of the House, are prepared to admit that so far as the general principle of taxation on agricultural income goes the Congress is not against such a measure. But, Sir, the Congress demands and has always demanded that whenever there will be a proposal for taxation it must go hand in hand with proper representation. What is the situation in the country today? The Congress is in prison. The leaders of the Congress who alone could deliver the goods and who alone could effectively take the people of the country with them for not only the liberation of the country but also for solving the many ailments from which we are suffering are not permitted to have their freedom. Those who are representing——

Mr. A. F. STARK: On a point of order, Sir. Is this relevant to the motion for circulation—the release of the Congress leaders?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not listened to the speech carefully.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am repeating what I said and with the fullest sense of responsibility that I do not consider the present measure opportune at a moment when the Congress leaders have been clapped in prison and when it is not possible for them to take the country with them to the goal of freedom. Sir, the name of the Congress has been invoked by the Hon'ble Minister in charge, an erstwhile devotee, who is now traitorously holding the patronage of the Muslim League Party.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, is the word "traitorously" used by Dr. Sanyal parliamentary?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have not reflected on the person. I used it in the adverbial sense.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it strikes one no doubt to be unpleasant, but I doubt very much whether the expression is unparliamentary.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: As long as we know that it is parliamentary it is all right because we can also use it.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Yes, use it aganst a traitor.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What I wanted to emphasise is this that it ill-behoves somebody whose power, position and privilege are entirely due to unholy methods to invoke the sacred name of the Congress to introduce a measure of taxation at this hour. The present time is extremely inopportune for a measure like this not merely because the country is suffering terribly through shortage of food and through economic distress but also because—here I speak with some sense of responsibility as a humble student of Economics—the agricultural income of the rentier class, who are most likely to be affected by this measure, is absolutely inelastic and it would not be equitable to tax a section of the people, however justified the measure may be in normal times, at a time like this when their income has remained absolutely inelastic. Sir, this measure of taxation has also gone with the threat that there will be an enhanced taxation on sales shortly in this province. We on this side of the House would like to lodge our emphatic protest against the manner of burdening the people with increased taxation over and over again in very many different directions.

Two reasons have been adduced for introducing this tax at this time. The one is that Government needs funds and the other is that Government finds it equitable to tax agricultural income. On a careful scrutiny both these grounds seem to be absolutely without proper foundation. So far as the needs of the province are concerned it is perfectly well known that the soaring expenses of this province have been solely and largely due to war conditions and that being the position it is only fair that either the United Nations as a whole or at least the Government of India who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of dragging India into this war should bear the entire financial liability for making Bengal one of the

principal theatres of war. If the resources required had been for any nation-building purpose or purposes there could be some slight justification for coming to this House for additional resources. But we find that whatever money we could collect from the overburdened people of this province goes to a bottomless pit, a pit that probably is never to be filled and that pit today has swallowed enough to create a deficit of Rs. 7,36,00,000 in this province in one or two years.

We submit that the necessary resources under the present war conditions created through the war must come from the Centre, and this is all the more justifiable because the Centre has deprived the province shortly after the declaration of the war of the legitimate dues that the province should expect from a share of the income-tax as decided in the award of Sir Otto Niemeyer. When the Centre has increased the resources of the Central Government by depriving this province of her legitimate dues, it is only fair that the Centre should bear the entire burden of the war.

So far as the other reason is concerned, namely, the equity of the taxation, I have already indicated that, however equitable this tax might be, and I do agree with the Hon'ble Miinster in charge that Indian Economists throughout India had in the past expressed themselves, accepting the equity of this method of taxation, I submit that the present time completely changes the picture and it no longer remains equitable to tax one section of the population with inelastic incomes while others are making enormous profits in different other directions.

Sir, I submit most respectfully that a controversial measure of this character should not have been introduced at this time in the province. I had some information about it that, a few months ago, when this question was raised before the Finance Member of the Government of India by the then Hon'ble Minister in charge, I believe, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, when this question was discussed at Delhi, the Central Finance Department did appreciate the inopportune character of the time for the introduction of this measure. It is nothing new. This identical Bill was published in September, 1941, and since then it had been attempted to be revived from time to time but every time it was felt that it would be extremely unwise to pursue a measure of this character at this critical time. May we know if the Hon'ble Minister in charge today finds that the position has improved so far as the economic condition of the country is concerned? If it has changed at all it must inevitably have changed for the worse, and that is a further justification for not pursuing this matter further. So far as our party is concerned, we desire to have the measure postponed for eliciting public opinion till the end of July, 1944, and I do hope that by that time something will happen to enable us to know the condition that we will be thrown into thereafter and I respectfully submit, Sir, that before we know that there is a distinct ray of bright light on the horizon, such a measure of taxation should not be proceeded with. This is not the time, Sir, to enter into the merit of the clauses of the Bill, but if it is possible we shall deal with them at a later stage. Broadly speaking, I may be permitted to point out that the Bill,

as drafted at the present moment, is in many respects more stringent and different from the Bihar and Assam Agricultural Income-tax Acts, mention of which has been made. It does not make any provision to guard against the fragmentation of holdings into uneconomic units. Further, Sir, with regard to one class of privileged agriculturists, namely, the tea planters, particularly the European planters, some milk sop has been sought to be provided by permitting them exemptions under certain conditions and also refunds, as Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri points out. I also mean refunds when I talk of exemptions and it is surprising that a large part of the taxable source should thus be sought to be given a special privilege. I do not know if that has been devised to trap the European party to accept this taxation measure. I warn them that if today they get trapped into that position there will be nothing tomorrow to remove that little exemption and have full taxation imposed on the entire tea industry. And I trust that will come.

Sir, I submit that a controversial measure of this character may yet be postponed and Bengal may be saved from another groaning of taxation. We demand that taxation should be permitted only when there is normal functioning of Government and we do not trust the present Government which is merely functioning as henchmen of the Bureaucracy to be put in possession of further funds to enable the Bureaucracy to spend such funds in any way they like. We might concede taxation only when we have full authority to handle our funds in our own way, not otherwise.

Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Bill is another instance of the visionless and unsympathetic fashion in which this Government approaches the current problems, and frames its policy. When the food crisis is staring us grimly in the face and the Government has miserably failed to take up adequate measures to cope with the same, it still raises another issue by introducing the Agricultural Income-tax Bill. I cannot understand what mighty reasons have induced this Government to bring forward a measure which is not only highly controversial historically, but also extremely complicated in respect of its ultimate effect on the economy of this province.

In support of this measure, Sir, the Statement of Objects and Reasons laconically observes that this Bill is equitable and that it is necessary in the interest of general revenues. This authoritative assertion without logic or argument is altogether unconvincing, and is moreover out of tune with the democratic ways of thinking. There has been an abnormal increase in the expenditure of Government no doubt. We know, Sir, that this is predominantly due to the existence of the war economy and the ultimate responsibility for this increase in expenditure lies with the Government of India. We have not been told, Sir, whether this Government has represented to the Central Government in this matter, urging that a good share of the burden of this emergency expenditure should be borne by All-India, Bengal being made the main base of war operations, both offensive and defensive against Japanese menace.

Sir, coming to the general principles of the Bill, I shall not raise the question of past pledges, or even the legal or moral issues involved in tapping this particular source of revenue in Bengal. For the present, I shall confine myself to the questions of equity and expediency, involved in this particular measure. This is a direct tax, and it is an ordinary canon of all direct taxes that it must look into the principle of ability of the assessees and must ensure the sound canon of equal sacrifice. Has the ability to pay increased so far as the Bengal agricultural interests are concerned? Government seems to argue that the income of the landowners has increased owing to the high prices prevailing at the time and the general inflationary tendency of all prices including agricultural products. Inflation is no doubt there, but there is also much hardship which has come in the trail of an ill-conceived and unplanned currency policy. Has the Government paused to consider and assess properly the disastrous effects that have been produced on all fixed incomes, including those agricultural interests whose incomes have been more or less fixed and have moreover no means of increasing? The landlords are statutorily forbidden to increase rent because of enhanced prices of agricultural products. They have moreover been struck by the high cost of living and they have to pay more as expenses of collection because the establishment and other incidental charges have increased. The surplus income of the agricultural interests covered by this taxation measure is a myth, and what they need is some sort of relief from the heavy burdens imposed on them by the disastrous inflationary policy adopted by the Government. Moreover the difficulties of the landlords have increased within recent years as a result of the no-rent mentality of the tenants, non-realisation of rents, arrears of rents, and difficulties of realisation of cesses including the quota payable by *raiyats*. It is a sad reflection on past policy of the Government that it did not introduce any suitable measures to help the landlords in the solution of their difficulties. Besides the natural calamities like flood and drought are there. The landlords require relief and help from the Government but instead, this Government has presented them with a further prospect of adding to their burden!

Take then the sound canon of equal sacrifice. The Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee of 1924-25 made a brief estimate of the tax burdens on landowners as compared with other incomes including that of commerce and industry. It found that land revenue or rent and cesses taken together range roughly between 25 and 50 per cent. on the rentals, that is, 4 annas to 8 annas in the rupee. Besides these are fixed charges irrespective of the actual receipts. In the case of income-tax (which covers the incomes of all persons other than landowners) this rate scales from 9 pies to 30 pies plus super-tax beyond Rs. 25,000. It is needless to go into the details, but this illustration will at once show that there is already a wide disparity of tax burdens as between the agricultural and non-agricultural interests. The controversy whether land revenue is a tax or rent need not be raised, as this is at best a legal quibble and a tax is a tax whether you take it in the name of revenue or any other name.

Then again there is the question whether the proceeds that are going to be realised from this levy on agricultural incomes is going to be spent for the interests of agriculture. This is very relevant in the case of a direct tax, where all sound canons of taxation indicate that a relation of *quid pro quo* should be maintained as far as practicable. Unless this is maintained, the discrimination that is already involved in this measure will be more pointed and invidious. Has the Government given any undertaking that the proceeds of agricultural income-tax will be solely or at all utilised for the improvement of agriculture? Here again there is no satisfactory answer. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the Government simply points out that "additional revenue is urgently needed". This is indeed a brazen-faced manner of asking for funds from the representatives of the people.

This being the nature of this taxation proposal, the iniquitous nature of the same will be more obvious if we take into view the particular class or classes in Bengal which will be affected. A comparative estimate of the position as compared with Bihar and Assam will bring out the position in Bengal into more prominent relief. In Assam this tax is being paid by some 600 persons of whom some 500 are proprietors of tea gardens and about 100 are landlords. In Bihar, the tax was imposed on incomes above Rs. 5,000 and the bulk of the tax was paid by some 1,154 assessees. It will be seen that both these measures aimed at limiting its operation to as few as possible, and though this fact itself does not alter the iniquitous nature of the proposal itself, yet the aim of these Governments had been to reduce the disturbance to the economy of the country to the minimum possible limit. We should also remember that these were introduced in comparatively normal times, and certainly not in a time of wide distress. It should also be remembered that there is no education cess either in Bihar or Assam. Here in Bengal we have been treated with a Bill which seems to have no redeeming feature. In Bengal apart from the bigger landlords, there is an innumerable growth of tenure-holders, a factor which is not present either in Bihar or in Assam in a considerable manner. The taxable limit being Rs. 2,000, the tax on agricultural incomes in Bengal will include a very large number of assessees which will bring within its scope not only the bigger landlords but also host of the landowners who constitute the "middle classes of Bengal". As we have already seen, this class has been worst hit by the inflationary tendencies of the war-time price-level in India. Apart from the question of widespread hardship which is likely to be caused by this measure, there is moreover the question whether the yield of this tax will be such as is worth while for the risk and inconvenience. Considering the wide dispersion of agricultural incomes among the tenure-holders, the estimated receipts will certainly not be high. On the other hand, we have the prospect of the economic extinction of the middle classes who form the backbone of our country.

Sir, I therefore submit that this proposal of a levy on agricultural incomes in Bengal is not only iniquitable and highly discriminatory, but that it has also the dangerous prospect of undermining the very foundation on which our economic order depends. It was in 1925 that the Indian

Taxation Enquiry Committee pointed out that "there are administrative and political objections to the removal of the exemption at the present time". If it was true twenty years ago, the argument certainly gains an added importance today when we are threatened with the dangers inherent in a war economy. Considering the seriousness of the present situation we can legitimately feel that this Government has absolutely no business to raise this controversy during war time.

We are a minority in this House having only five representatives in a House of 250 and we depend entirely on the good sense of my friends to give us a just and fair deal. The Government has signally failed in handling the food situation; and when it comes forward with still another controversial proposal, this simply shows how lightly it views its responsibilities to the people and to the vital necessity of concentrating all our energies towards the successful prosecution of the war. With these words I support the motion for circulation.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I support the motion for circulation which has been moved on behalf of the official Congress Party. On behalf of our party there is also a motion tabled in the name of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri.

Sir, it is with considerable surprise that I find that the present Government have decided to introduce the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill. The reasons which were put forward by the Hon'ble Finance Minister for taking such a step is, I understand, mainly this, namely, that it is the Government of India who are pressing the Government of Bengal to take up this measure at the present juncture. I find, Sir, on a reference to the Hon'ble Finance Minister's budget statement at page 9 that it is stated: "It remains for me to give some indication of the measures I propose for reducing the startling gap between our expenditure and our revenue. Tomorrow I shall beg leave to introduce and move for reference to a Select Committee a Bill to impose an income-tax on agricultural incomes. I need not make a secret of Government's decision to introduce later in the year a Bill to enhance the sales tax." When I read this passage in the Hon'ble Finance Minister's statement, it at once brought back to my mind the financial situation which was in existence in this province as far back as January, 1943. Now, Sir, at that stage the Government of India were insisting that the Government of Bengal should take some steps for the purpose of enhancing their revenues by introducing fresh taxation in this province. In fact, if I am not disclosing a Cabinet secret, the Bengal Cabinet actually came to a decision that the sales tax should be enhanced, almost doubled, with regard to some selected articles and that decision had been solemnly recorded by the Bengal Cabinet, but at the same time, at the instance of some members of the Cabinet, it was decided not to give effect to that decision unless and until the Government of India were approached and negotiations reopened with them, so that no fresh taxation need have to be imposed upon this province. As a result of that, the Government deputed me along with the Finance Secretary to have discussions with the Finance Member of the Government of India in Delhi. It was in the last

week of January that I had the advantage of meeting the Finance Member in company with the Finance Secretary of the Government of Bengal. I take this opportunity of stating categorically before this House that these questions with regard to the introduction of an Agricultural Income-tax Bill and enhancement of the sales tax were definitely discussed by the Finance Member, and the Government of India through the Finance Member actually gave an assurance to the Government of Bengal that these questions need not be brought forward now in these times of emergency and that the Government of India would "see us through". That was exactly the language which was used. As regards the Ways and Means Advance to the extent of Rs. 2½ crores which fell due on the 30th June last, they actually agreed that no payment need be made then and that payment might be deferred till the end of the current year. In fact, the question of agricultural income-tax was raised, discussed and was definitely abandoned; so also the question of enhancement of sales tax. Today I find that the Hon'ble Finance Minister has come forward with this Bill and his only justification seems to be this that it is the Government of India who are insisting. I do not know how to characterise this declaration on the part of the Hon'ble Finance Minister. It is a confession of a most weak and meek surrender on the part of this Government. Sir, my sympathy with the present Finance Minister is wholehearted that he should have been made the scapegoat for this weak-kneed surrender. I fully sympathise with his position. He had to swallow this pill in silence. I am perfectly sure that he had to accept this position because of the policy which has been accepted and adopted by the present Government, namely, "never say no to anything which comes from higher authorities" in order to keep their position and power. I submit, Sir, that the items which have been set out at page 9 of the Finance Minister's statement would go to show that each and every item of this Advance and Loan from the Government of India refers to war expenditure in this Province. It is certainly not due to any activity on the part of this Government which is of a nation-building character, which is of a purely provincial character or which does not owe its origin to war expenditure out and out of the most palpable character. It is war expenditure necessitated by the war situation and has nothing to do with provincial expenditure, and for which the Government of India ought to take up the entire responsibility and the entire burden. What is now proposed to be done is that a good portion of it is sought to be thrown on the shoulders of Bengal. The Finance Minister has actually stated in his statement, "No revenue can be expected from an agricultural income-tax till 1944-45 and it may not be possible to pass the legislation necessary to enhance our sales tax in time to afford any relief during the current financial year." Even a fringe of this huge gap between revenue and expenditure, to which reference has been made, is not going to be touched in the slightest degree by passing this Agricultural Income-tax Bill and it will have no effect whatsoever on the balancing of budget this year or even in the coming year. In the circumstances, to bring forward on the floor of the House today such a revolutionary measure in spite of the appalling food situation in the Province is possible only for this Government which has

lost all shame in the situation which has been created in the Province today. Sir, I am surprised that such a revolutionary measure should be sent to the Select Committee without even caring to consult public opinion. It can only be possible for this Government and for no other Government having the slightest sense of responsibility. I say, Sir, that if the Government of India have resumed their pressure upon the Bengal Government, instead of surrendering to them in such a weak and humble fashion Government ought to have come before this House and said: "This is the position —Government of India are going back on all the previous promises given to the last Government with regard to expenditure which has been incurred on account of the war." I say, Sir, that this Government ought to have taken their stand firmly and definitely upon the assurances which had already been given—assurances of a far-reaching character, assurances upon which there could be no going back. Instead of doing that, they are flinging this Bill on the head of the Province without the slightest attempt to consult public opinion.

Sir, I support the motion for circulation.

Mr. H. ROWAN HODGE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I desire to oppose the motion for circulation of this Bill and with your leave, Sir, to move my motion——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not move your motion now, but you can speak on it. You can move your motion subsequently.

Mr. H. ROWAN HODGE: Very well, Sir.

That there is need to raise additional finance for this Province there can be no doubt and agricultural income-tax is a provincial source of revenue. It follows therefore that the principle, and I emphasize the word principle, of an agricultural income-tax in this Province deserves support.

We, upon these benches, therefore, are prepared to support a Bill to levy agricultural income-tax, provided the form of the Bill is reasonable.

What is reasonable depends upon the standard by which the Bill is judged. There are, in various parts of the world, a variety of different schemes of income-tax. An examination of the Bill, which was first introduced into this House in 1941, reveals that the scheme of taxation adopted is similar to that found in other provinces and based upon the Central Indian Income-tax Acts; at any rate as regards the scheme of tax collection and the powers of the income-tax department. This is particularly noticeable regarding the method of charging the tax according to the individual's income and the machinery for collection of tax by direct assessment and at source.

In this respect the Bill adopts similar principles to those which are found in the Bihar Agricultural Income-Tax Act and the Assam Agricultural Income-Tax Act. The party in power in this House in 1941 may, in fact, be congratulated upon having produced a more effective and a more rational measure than the Governments of either of those provinces. And

the present Government may be congratulated for introducing the measure in the same form. The Bill is, however, by no means free from defects.

As time is short, I propose to speak generally upon some of the principal defects in the Bill itself. First of all the important definition of "agricultural income" in the Bill is so framed that it seeks to include a conception of a field of taxation outside the province——

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Refer to clause 4.

Mr. H. ROWAN HODGE: I am aware of that and I know that Government may answer me by saying that clause 4 of the Bill only charges agricultural income in Bengal. But, Sir, if that is so then why introduce in the definition wider possibilities? In addition, the Bill charges income from buildings used in connection with agriculture, a purely fictitious or imaginary income which the tax-payer never receives. A serious question arises with regard to the collection charges. The Bill seeks to charge the tax on agricultural income realised and when it comes to the collection charges an arbitrary percentage is fixed with the result that the tax-payer is paying again on an imaginary income which may or may not have a direct bearing on the actual income.

In addition, there is the important question of refunds to rupee companies and firms. The Bill only allows them refunds at reduced rates. This brings me to a very important question concerning sterling companies and sterling shares. I was surprised to see in the press the report of a speech made by Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker last Sunday to the effect that this Bill gives preferential treatment to sterling companies. He has stated that the sterling companies have been let off while the rupee companies are being taxed. Now, Sir, let us examine the truth of this statement. The sterling tea companies always have had to pay income-tax on their agricultural income.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Clause 48.

Mr. H. ROWAN HODGE: I am coming to that.

(At this stage the red lamp was lit.)

Sir, I hope, I may be allowed a minute or two more as mine is the only speech from these benches. I have only a few more words to say.

The sterling tea companies have always had to pay income-tax on their agricultural income. Today they are paying the equivalent of eight annas in the rupee as income-tax on their agricultural income, apart from excess profits tax and sur tax. The effect of the Bengal tax is that they have, in addition to that, to pay a tax of two annas six pies. The Bengal Government will give up nothing under this Bill. The sterling tea companies having paid 10 annas 6 pies will get a reduction from the United Kingdom Treasury of 2 annas 6 pies from their United Kingdom income-tax and still have to pay eight annas. They get nothing from the Bengal Government.

I have been referred to clause 48. What does clause 48 say? It says that if the companies can obtain a refund from the United Kingdom

Treasury then when the Bengal rate is raised to more than 4 annas they can come to Bengal for that excess; which is a very different matter. I don't think any honourable member seriously contemplates the Bengal rate of agricultural income-tax exceeding four annas in the rupee.

From what I have said I think it is apparent that there are controversial issues in this Bill. At the same time we support the principle of the tax. Therefore, Sir, I oppose the amendments for circulation because the Bill has already been before the public ever since 1941. But with your leave I wish to move my amendment No. 18.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will come later on.

Mr. H. ROWAN HODGE: As you please, Sir.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, the Bill under discussion is a very important measure, but the time selected is very inopportune and unfortunate. Sir, we are in a peculiar position. The Krishak Praja Party stands for the abolition of the Permanent Settlement. As has been stated by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, there was a provision for an agricultural income-tax in the Floud Commission's Report. But, Sir, it was stated therein that that would be an *ad interim* measure before the abolition of the Permanent Settlement comes into force, and the income derived therefrom should be spent for agricultural improvement. But, Sir, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has practically stated that he is going to do neither. Unfortunately as we agree with the principle of the measure we are not taking part in today's voting either for circulation or for reference to a Select Committee. We have sent our representatives to the Select Committee. Our representatives will try to safeguard the interests of the *bona fide* peasants. As has been stated, the income that will be taxed must be over Rs. 50,000. The limit should be lower. If that is not decided after the Bill comes out of the Select Committee, our party will decide its final course of action. Whether we shall have to fight the Bill tooth and nail will depend on the form in which the Bill emerges from the Select Committee. Our final course of action will be decided then.

With these few words, I beg to state that our party will not take part in today's voting either for the circulation motion or for reference to the Select Committee.

Maharajadhiraja UDAY CHAND MAHATAB Bahadur, of Burdwan: Ever since 1793 we have been accustomed to the violations of pledges given to the zemindars not only by the Court of Directors but also in the Queen's Proclamation. Hence subsequent anti-landlord measures and a hurried introduction of this Bill are not at all surprising to me. Although promises were made by the present Ministry when coming into power that they would not introduce any controversial and anti-landlord legislation during the duration of the war, we have found to our cost how much these pledges and promises are worth. They are merely a means to gain power and when such power is gained it is very easy to wriggle out of such assurances. Anyhow, Sir, this is not the time and place to quibble over

these matters. I understand that the object of introducing the Bill is to try and meet the deficit of the Bengal Government which amounts to about Rs. 7 crores 36 lakhs and I also understand that although the Bengal Ministers did not immediately want to introduce this Bill, they had to do so due to pressure from the Centre. I do not know how far this is true. But it is rather surprising that the Central Government should be in a position to dictate to a Provincial Government as to what are the ways and means of repaying their loans. From the figures in my possession, I find that probably the total amount realisable by the introduction of this measure will not be more than Rs. 30 lakhs, whereas the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has just now stated that probably our debts to the Centre will amount to Rs. 14 crores. So, I do not know how this measure alone will be able to repay our debts to the Centre. Of course, the Hon'ble Mr. Goswamy said in his Budget statement that the sales tax would be enhanced which, of course, might bring in something more. Anyway, at a time like this when millions of people are starving and dying for want of an adequate food policy, it is a pity that Government should waste its time and energy on a controversial Bill like this instead of trying to solve the most vital and acute problem that faces it at the moment and stands as a shame to the whole of this Province. I have neither the time nor the inclination at present to go into details of this Bill. Sir, the expression "Landlords" includes the middle classes and the Bill as drafted if passed into law will burden all rent-receiving classes. Landlords have been hard hit by many legislative acts and the imposition of the Primary Education Cess as are well known to all members of this House. In Bihar and Assam of course there is no Primary Education Cess, but here in introducing the measure this has not been taken into consideration. I do not know who is responsible for putting it into the heads of Provincial and Central Governments that landlords are rolling in wealth in view of the high prices of agricultural products. I cannot find words strong enough to condemn such absurd ideas. Government know who are making profits out of the present inflation in prices as a result of the war, and it is up to Government to tax those and not landlords to meet their deficit, for the income of landlords are fixed and inelastic. It is not the cultivators who are profiting by high prices but middlemen, and as I have said they do not come under the ambit of this taxation. Moreover, the tax will reduce the prices of *zemindari* properties if in future the Floud Commission Report is taken into consideration. The greatest defect of all which I would like to bring specially to the notice of members of this House is that the original idea of this tax was that the tax should be levied from landlords to utilise it in improving the productivity of the soil and thus help the agriculturists. But in the present Bill under review the whole amount is supposed to go towards meeting the deficit of the Government due to war conditions over which they have no control. Government are not only not doing anything to try and solve the present condition in this province but by introducing this Bill they are not benefiting the agriculturists at all. As the Bill is a controversial one in many points, I would suggest that the Bill should be introduced in the next session after eliciting public opinion. It is all the

more objectionable as it is not a temporary measure to meet a temporary deficit but it is a permanent measure which will in no way improve the agricultural conditions of the Province, far less help the agriculturists.

Sir, with these few words I support the motion for circulation.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, I crave your indulgence for one minute only. Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu very dramatically referred to his interview with the Finance Member of the Government of India in January, 1943. Perhaps he will refresh his memory, but I think I am right in saying that the agricultural income-tax was not even mentioned in that interview and that was a time when our ways and means stood at 2½ crores of rupees. That is all I have got to say.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Will you please consult the proceedings of the Cabinet of the Government of Bengal and you will find there what I said.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have got to put this amendment now. The question before the House is the amendment of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal. I would divide this amendment into two parts: first is the circulation for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon.

Accordingly, the first part of the motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, namely, that the Bengal Agricultural Income-Tax Bill, 1943, be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon, was then put and lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: Amendment Nos. 2 to 10 fall through. Now, I think it would be better if Mr. Fazlur Rahman moves his motion, for if that is carried all others will fall through. So I call upon Mr. Fazlur Rahman to move his amendment.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that the following names be added to the personnel of the proposed Select Committee, namely:—

(1) Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta,

(2) Mr. Dhirendra Narayan Mukherji, and

(3) Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Sir, I have intimated to you in writing that our party has decided that the name of Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman be withdrawn from the Select Committee, for inadequate representation of our party.

Mr. SPEAKER: The fact is, I have already got his consent. If he refuses to sit on the Select Committee, it is he who can speak on that and that is a different thing altogether.

Khan Bahadur A. M. L. RAHMAN: Sir, I would request you to delete my name from the Select Committee, for in view of the decision of our party I am reluctantly compelled to withdraw my membership of the Select Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can duly resign your membership if you like, but the question of withdrawal does not arise here.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, I accept the amendment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question before the House is the amendment of Mr. Fazlur Rahman, which has been accepted by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Bill, and it is this, that the following names be added to the personnel of the proposed Select Committee, namely:—

(1) Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta,

(2) Mr. Dhirendra Narayan Mukherji, and

(3) Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman.

So far as Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman is concerned, he gave his consent but he withdraws his consent now.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I think it is not permissible to withdraw consent.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, you are right.

The motion of Mr. Fazlur Rahman that the following names be added to the personnel of the proposed Select Committee, namely:—

(1) Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta,

(2) Mr. Dhirendra Narayan Mukherji, and

(3) Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman.

was then put and agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: The other motions relating to insertion of names necessarily fall through.

Mr. H. ROWAN HODGE: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that for the figure and word "20th November" proposed in the motion the figure and word "21st December" be substituted.

I do not want to take up the time of the House on this amendment but I would merely like to point out in view of the fact that honourable members will be away from Calcutta at the end of the session, my proposal is if Government will accept the amendment, we shall then be able to consider the details of the Bill for a month before it comes to the Select Committee; it will in no way delay the consideration of the Bill in the next Budget session. I trust Government will accept my amendment.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I accept.

The motion of Mr. H. Rowan Hodge that for the figure and word "20th November" proposed in the motion the figure and word "21st December" be substituted, was then put and agreed to.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, you had been pleased to announce that the other motions proposed to be moved fell through. I presume you had done it on the assumption that the total number of members on the

Select Committee is limited to 17 and as originally 14 names were proposed there was no scope for any further addition and that is why, I think, you suggested that the other motions fell through. I submit that it may also be considered that some other names might be substituted for some and motions to that effect might be permitted to be moved, because oherwise it might be irregular to disallow the motions at this stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: The whole position is, as far as I see, that there is no amendment to the effect that the name of so and so be deleted and the name of so and so be substituted.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir. There is Mr. Adwaita Kumar Maji's motion which is a substitution.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as these names are concerned there is another technical difficulty. Consent of these persons has not been received.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami as amended that the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Bill, 1943, be referred to a Select Committee consisting of—

(1) Maulvi Abdul Latif Biswas,

(2) Maulvi Abul Hashim,

(3) Kazi Emdadul Haque,

(4) Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz,

(5) Maulvi Ahmed Ali Mridha,

(6) the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea, M.B.E.,

(7) Maharajadhiraja Uday Chand Mahtab Bahadur, of Burdwan,

(8) Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri,

(9) Mr. Shahedali,

(10) Mr. C. W. Miles,

(11) Mr. H. R. Hodge,

(12) Babu Shyama Prosad Barman,

(13) Babu Kshetra Nath Singha,

(14) Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta,

(15) Mr. Dhirendra Narayan Mukherji,

(16) Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman, and

(17) the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department (the mover),

with instructions to submit their report by the 21st December, 1943, the number of members forming the quorum being five, was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment motion.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Sir, I beg to move that the business of the Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent

public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the failure of the Bengal Government to set at liberty persons purported to have been detained under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules in spite of the decision of the Calcutta High Court and the recent decision of the Federal Court of India declaring the procedure adopted by the Bengal Government regarding detention as contrary to law and improper.

Every one here will agree with me that the subject matter of this motion is of the gravest concern to every section of Indian opinion. For years together we have been familiar with arbitrary detentions and convictions under lawless laws but today this has reached the most staggering proportion even according to the Indian standard. The sort of detention provided by the Defence of India Rules is unheard of in any civilised Government except in the Fascist countries. No Government with the least sense of justice will dream of making such laws a part of the ordinary law of the land. I know it is a great temptation to say that such an emergency measure is known in times of war and even to quote statutes of England, but, Sir, the comparison is baseless. The procedure followed in England is absolutely different. There a man upon whom a detention order is served has got to be informed through a non-official advisory committee as to what the charges are and he is allowed to make an answer to those charges. But nothing of this kind is provided here in our country. There is a provision in the Act about scrutiny and of being satisfied, but the provision is just so much of jargon. I say, Sir, such law smacks of Gestapo and concentration camp more than of any civilised legislation. I do not think I can do better than to read out to the House what the Federal Court has said with regard to this law and the administration of that law in this province. The Federal Court in the recent judgment has said "any consideration of the available material by Mr. Porter before the issue of detention order did not amount to compliance either with the letter or with the spirit of the provisions of rule 26 according to his own affidavit", and it has concluded by saying "we cannot condemn the procedure adopted in these cases too strongly. It would be difficult to conceive of a more callous disregard of the provisions of the law and of the liberty of the subject". I draw particular attention of the Hon'ble Minister who is administering law and order and ask him to listen as to what is the law which has been laid down by the highest Tribunal wherein they say "we cannot condemn the procedure in these cases too strongly. It would be difficult to conceive of a more callous disregard of the provisions of the law and of the liberty of the subject". This is what the Court has held. I only ask what more sad spectacle can there be than that the Department supposed to be in charge of law and order would show an utter disregard as to the law as laid down by the Federal Court. May I also tell the Hon'ble Home Minister that by the Government of India Act, section 210, all authorities, civil, judicial, are enjoined upon to act in aid of the decision of the Federal Court. But what do we find? The highest Court of this Province held that the detentions were illegal and they ordered that they should be set at liberty, but what has the Government done? In the absence of the Home Minister,

in the absence of the Governor who alone were entitled to pass orders for continuing the detention, these gentlemen, who were set at liberty, were arrested within the Court precincts under an anti-diluvion Act, called Regulation III of 1818. Sir, it is too thin a cloak for the purpose of disregarding the law. In this connection, may I draw the attention of the learned Home Minister to what my honourable colleague Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi said in July last. Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi in one of his lucid moments of patriotic urge said "There is however one point on which I should like to draw the attention of the present Ministers and that is the application of Regulation III of 1818 to detain the politically-minded Indians. There was no need to make use of it especially when the Governor and the Home Minister were out of Calcutta as was proved by the affidavit in the High Court. I should like to appeal to the present Council of Ministers that the sooner they forget that there is an anti-diluvion law, called Regulation III, the better it would be for everybody of this Province." May I also read out what Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi said to be the creed and principle of the Muslim League? He said "I want my Hindu patriots to realise that the Muslim League considers the question of the freedom and liberty of the Hindus as equal or even greater than that of the Muslims".

Sir, we are aware, during the July discussion the Leader of the European group classified the persons who were detained under the Defence of India Act into three classes. Speaking about the second class he said that as regards the persons who joined in a mass movement after August disturbances, their cases will have to be considered and if the Government thinks that those disturbances are now under their control, they ought to consider the question of their release. I want to say a word about those persons The blame for the upheaval rests entirely with the Government and with no one else. It was the Government who first infuriated the people by suddenly arresting their leaders and all those disturbances followed on account of the thoughtless action of the Government, so that if anybody is responsible more than another, it is the Government who launched the reprehensible repression which led to those disturbances. Now the Leader of the European group also referred to another class of persons, namely, the labour leaders who created trouble. Sir, with your permission I want to refer to the affidavit of a detenue labour leader, an affidavit filed before the High Court and which was not contradicted on behalf of the Government. Therein Mr. Sibnath Banerjee stated amongst other things "since 1935 when the Nazis have become a menace to the world of labour, I have been following anti-Fascist policy and that since 1941 when Nazi Germany attacked Soviet Russia I have been following that policy quite aggresively to bring about the ruin of the Axis powers, and since June, 1941, I have been trying to get the grievances of the workers redressed with the help of the Labour Commissioner, Bengal, and the District Magistrate of Howrah by the process of negotiation and consideration". Yet a member of this Legislative Assembly representing a Labour constituency has been detained and is still under detention. I therefore say that there is not only no moral

justification for these detentions but there is today no legal justification whatsoever. I, in the name of the distracted parents of these political prisoners, in the name of their hapless and forlorn wives, and husbands in the case of lady detenus, and in the name of their distressed children, appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to respect law, to respect the decision of the Court—which they are bound to respect under the Government of India Act,—and to release these prisoners. I want him to set his face against continuing the detention of these people under other cloaks. I can tell him that once he makes up his mind he will find that there are statutes by which this kind of detention cannot be continued.

(At this stage the red light was lit but he was given a little time to finish his speech.)

My time is up. I again appeal to the Hon'ble Home Minister if he is true to the Muslim League principles as given out by Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi who ought to know being in the Party, if he is true to his own promises now to do not a favour but to act in a legal manner and respect the decision of the Court. If he does not do so—Mr. Siddiqi's description of him as the biggest liberator and the biggest guarantor of civil liberty—will become an epithet of ridicule so far as he is concerned. (Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Good!)

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I do not desire to intervene in this debate at any great length, but only for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Hon'ble the Home Minister to two matters which I consider it necessary to be brought to his notice. Sometime ago, I considered it my duty to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Home Minister to the cases of security prisoners particularly those who are members of this Legislature and invited him to consider their cases afresh and to pass orders directing their release. The Hon'ble Chief Minister was pleased to reply to my letter, and in his reply, he stated as follows:—

> "We have laid down a general policy of release and all those who satisfy the conditions are being released. Individual cases are only examined to see if there are special circumstances such as serious illness which would justify release."

Well, Sir, I did not follow up this correspondence with a question as to what the general policy was which had been laid down by the present Government and what conditions were required to be satisfied by the prisoners in order to secure their release. I hope and trust that the Hon'ble Chief Minister will take the opportunity of this debate of clarifying his position on this matter. This discussion relates to the arrest of security prisoners under Regulation III of 1818 but I hope that the Hon'ble Chief Minister will vouchsafe to us the details of those conditions which the present Government have laid down for the purpose of directing themselves in the matter of release.

There is one other matter to which I will draw his attention. I do not know whether he is aware that a similar situation arose in 1930 in consequence of a decision of the Calcutta High Court. It was during the Civil

Disobedience Movement in 1930 when a notification was issued prohibiting processions and assemblies in the city of Calcutta. Certain ladies in the Burra Bazar quarter, Sm. Lakshmi Devi and others, formed themselves into a procession and were arrested in consequence of the disobedience of the notification. They were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment by a Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta. Their cases came up before the High Court. I remember having appeared on behalf of the accused persons in that case before Sir George Rankin, Chief Justice and Mr. Justice S. C. Mallik. The High Court on that occasion decided that the notification was *ultra vires*, and that as such, the arrest and the conviction were illegal and they directed the release of those accused persons. In consequence of the declaration by the High Court that this notification was *ultra vires*, the Government of Bengal did the barest act of justice in the cases of 155 prisoners who had been convicted in consequence of violation of that notification which had been declared illegal, and released all of them forthwith. I ask the present Home Minister whether they will take a leaf out of the book of the bureaucratic administration of those days and whether they have got the courage to accept the decision of the High Court and the Federal Court declaring that Rule 26 was *ultra vires* of the legislature and whether acting upon that decision of the Federal Court, they will release persons who have been taken into custody and since been detained under the provisions of Rule 26. If the previous Government of Bengal in those days could muster courage to do that, why should this responsible Government installed in Office by the suffrage of the legislature hesitate to perform that obvious duty? They ought to come forward and uphold the rule of law and accept the decision of the Federal Court and release those persons arrested and detained under Rule 26. I would ask this Government to act up to the principle of law of which they are the supposed upholders and guardians.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHAYA : মাননীয় Speaker মহোদয়, Security বন্দীদের মুক্তির বিষয়, দেশের বর্ত্তমান অবস্থায় অতি গুরুতর এবং প্রয়োজনীয় বিষয়, এবং তাদের মুক্তি না দেওয়ায় অতি নিকটতম সময়ে দেশে গুরুতর পরিস্থিতির সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। আমরা আইনের মর্য্যাদার দিক থেকে যদি বিচার করি, আমরা মনুষ্যত্বের দিক থেকে যদি বিচার করি, আমরা এ দেশের মহা সঙ্কটের সময়ের অবস্থার দিক থেকে যদি বিচার করি, যে দিক থেকেই বিচার করি, এটা আমরা অস্বীকার করতে পারবো না যে তাদের মুক্তি একান্ত প্রয়োজনীয় এবং তাদের মুক্তি না দেওয়ায় অতি নিকটতম সময়ে দেশে গুরুতর পরিস্থিতির সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। প্রথম আইনের মর্য্যাদার দিকের কথা দেখা যাক্। যাঁরা আইনের কর্ত্তা, আইনের প্রভু, তাঁরা যদি আইন না মানেন তাহলে দেশে আইনের মর্য্যাদা কেউ দেবে এ আশা তাঁরা করতে পারেন না। ২৬ ধারা যখন প্রথম এ দেশে Federal Court বে-আইনী ঘোষিত করলেন, Ultra-vires ঘোষিত করলেন, সেই সময় সহস্র সহস্র বন্দী ভারতবর্ষে, যারা বিনা বিচারে বন্দী ছিল, তাদের মুক্তি পাওয়া উচিত ছিল। কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিশ্চিন্ত আরামে চুপ করে বসে রইলেন, Federal Courtকে বৃদ্ধাঙ্গুষ্ঠ দেখিয়ে দিলেন, তাদের রায়ে পদাঘাত করলেন। যখন Habeas Corpus petition হবার উপক্রম হচ্চে সেই সময় তাড়াতাড়ি আমাদের সরকার পক্ষ থেকে একটা validating ordinance তৈরি করা হল। কলিকাতা High Court সেই validating ordinanceকেও ultra

vires ঘোষণা করলেন অথচ তখনও আমাদের বাংলা সরকার এই সব Security বন্দীদের মুক্তি দেওয়ার প্রয়োজন বোধ করলেন না দিব্যি আটক করে রেখে দিলেন। কলিকাতা High Courtএর jurisdictionএই তারা ছিল; সুতরাং তাদের আটক করে রাখবার কোন অধিকারই সরকারের ছিল না। যদি আইনের মর্য্যাদা রাখার প্রয়োজন বোধ করতেন তাহলে তাঁহারা কলকাতা হাইকোর্টের jurisdictionএর মধ্যে অতঃপর কিছুতেই তাদের আটক করে রাখতে পারতেন না। গভর্ণমেণ্ট Federal Courtএ পুনরায় আপীল করবেন বলেছিলেন। কিন্তু তা হলেও কিছু আসে যায় না---এঁরা বিনা বিচারে বন্দী, এবং কলকাতা হাইকোর্টের রায়ের পরে এমন কোন ধারা ছিল না, যার দ্বারা এদের জেলের মধ্যে আটক রাখা যেতে পারে। আমি মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি এ দিকে,---কি ধারা ছিল তাদের আটকে রাখবার জন্য? সেদিন কি করে তাঁরা এদের জেলের মধ্যে আটকে রাখলেন? ধরুন দেড় হাজারের উপর বন্দী এই বাংলা দেশে বিনা বিচারে বন্দী ছিল; কোনও ধারা ছিল না তাদের আটকে রাখার। তাঁরা যদি তখন জেল থেকে খালি হয়ে আসার জন্য জেল গেটে উপস্থিত হয়ে বলতেন "যে আমরা বাইরে চলে যাবো," তাহলে Jailor কি করতেন? লাঠি চালাতেন না গুলি চালাতেন? কলিকাতা হাইকোর্ট ঘোষিত অবৈধ আইনের ধারায় ত তাদের আটকে রাখা চলত না। তাঁরা ত কলিকাতা High Courtএর jurisdictionএর মধ্যেই ছিলেন? কিন্তু এর উত্তর নেই। সমস্ত দেশের লোক কৈফিয়ৎ চাইলো, কি করে এদের আটকে রাখলে? সমস্ত দেশের খবরের কাগজ এই আন্দোলন করলে, কিন্তু সরকার অবজ্ঞাভরে নীরব হয়ে রইলেন।

সুয়েজের এপারে ও ওপারে আইনের কত তফাৎ। বিলাতে Sir John Andersonকে বৃটিশ বিচারপতি জেলে পাঠাবার ধমক দিলেন, অনেক রকম গালাগালি করলেন এবং তিনি ক্ষমা চেয়ে কোন রকমে পার পেলেন। কি অপরাধ? না, একজন Habeas Corpus petition করেছিলেন,---একটা ছোট্ট কাগজে, সেটা in order ছিল না, এবং সেই petitionটা আদালতে পাঠাতে কিঞ্চিৎ দেরী হয়ে ছিল। আর আমাদের এখানে যখন কলিকাতা High Courtএ সিদ্ধান্ত হয়ে গেল, Federal Courtএ সিদ্ধান্ত হয়ে গেল, আমি নিজে জানি অনেকে Habeas Corpus petition পাঠালেন High Courtএ। কিন্তু এঁরা করলেন কি? High Courtএ তা না পাঠিয়ে সেগুলি পাঠিয়ে দিলেন শাসন বিভাগের কাছে এবং সেখানে সেগুলি বস্তা-পচা হয়ে পড়ে রইল। যদি এ সম্বন্ধে আমি এসেম্বিলিতে প্রশ্ন না করতাম এবং আমাদের শ্রদ্ধেয় Mr. N. K. Basu এ সম্বন্ধে প্রধান বিচারপতির দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ না করতেন তাহলে আজও তা বস্তাপচা হয়ে পড়ে থাকত। কিন্তু এই অনাচারের জন্য শাসন বিভাগের গায়ে একটি আঁচড়ও লাগেনি। আজ Federal Court তাঁদের রায় প্রকাশ করেছেন। তাঁরা এক বাক্যে বাংলা সরকারের আটক নীতির নিন্দা করেছেন। রাজবন্দীদের আটক রাখার কোন অজুহাতই বাংলা সরকার এখন দেখাতে পারেন না। এখনও কি এঁরা সিকিউরিটি বন্দীদের আটক রেখে দেবেন? তাঁরা নিজেরা যদি আইনের মর্য্যাদা না রাখেন তা হলে অপরে আইন মানবে এ তাঁরা কি করে আশা করেন। একজন সাধারণ নাগরিক আর একজন সাধারণ নাগরিককে এক minute যদি আটকে রেখে দেন তার জন্য তাঁকে ক্ষতিপূরণ দিতে হয়, সাজা পেতে হয়। আর আমাদের স্বয়ং Government যিনি শাসনকর্ত্তা, তিনি দিব্যি নিশ্চিন্তে এঁদের বেআইনীভাবে আটকে রেখে দিলেন,---এই দেড় হাজার বন্দীকে? এ গেল আইনের কথা।

তারপরে দেখুন এই সব বন্দী কারা। এঁরা সব বাছাই করা লোক; এঁরা কর্মকুশল সন্ন্যাসী তাপস্ লোক, এঁদের তুলনা নেই। আমরা পয়সার চিন্তা করি, পদগৌরব চাই, এঁরা চান দেশের ও দশের মঙ্গল—এঁরা আপন ভোলা, নিজের জন্য কিছু চান না। আজ দেশ মরণের দিকে ছুটে চলেছে। চারিদিকে দুর্ভিক্ষের তাণ্ডব। সহরে সহরে গ্রামে গ্রামে ক্ষুধার আগুন জ্বলে উঠেছে। কেমন করে হ'ল? কে দায়ী? সে আলোচনা নাই করলাম। কিন্তু একথা মানতেই হবে যে আজকের দিনে দেশকে বাঁচাতে হলে শত্রু মিত্র ভুলে গিয়ে, ভেদাভেদ ঘুচিয়ে দিয়ে, সকলে একতাবদ্ধ হয়ে কাঁধে কাঁধ মিলিয়ে কাজ করতে হবে। এই সময় আমাদের দেশের যাঁরা শ্রেষ্ঠ লোক—যাঁরা বন্যার দিনে, দুর্ভিক্ষের দিনে আগিয়ে আসেন, যাঁরা ঝড় ঝঞ্ঝা বুক পেতে নেন তাঁদের বেআইনীভাবে কারারুদ্ধ করে রেখে আমরা কি মহা মূর্খতার পরিচয় দিচ্ছি না? এখানে আরামে ঠাণ্ডা ঘরে, air-conditioned hallএ আমরা বসে থাকি। বক্তৃতা করি। নিজেদের হাততালি নিজেরা শ্রবণ করি। প্রচুর অর্থ গ্রহণ করি। আমরা বেশ আছি। কিন্তু আজ যদি Federal Courtএর রায়ে পদাঘাত করে দেশের এই দুর্দ্দিনে যাঁরা দেশের প্রকৃত বান্ধব তাঁদের কারারুদ্ধ করে রেখে দেই, তাহলে কি একান্ত মনুষ্যত্বের পরিচয় দেব না?

আমাদের Secretary of State, Amery সাহেব নিজের সুবিধামত অনেক কথাই বলেন। তিনি আমাদের এসেম্বিলিকে বঙ্গীয় পার্লামেণ্ট বলে অভিহিত করেন। এই বঙ্গীয় পার্লামেণ্টের কয়েকজন সদস্যের দুর্দ্দশার কথা ভাবুন। ফেডারেল কোর্টের রায়ের পরেও নিতান্ত বেআইনী-ভাবে ২৬ ধারামতে আজও এই পার্লামেণ্টারী সদস্যগণ আটক রয়েছেন। এ কি প্রহসন নয়? বিলাতে কোন সামান্য নাগরিকের এ রকম দশা হলে কি হত? হায়রে ও দেশের পার্লামেণ্ট আর এ দেশের পার্লামেণ্ট! আমাদের মর্য্যাদা বোধে, মনুষ্যত্ব বোধে এতে আঘাত লাগছে না?

যদি প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহাশয় ভারবাহী গর্দ্দভের মত না হন, পুতুলনাচের পুতুল না হন, তাহলে আর এক মিনিট বিলম্ব না করে অন্ততঃ এই পার্লামেণ্টের সদস্যদের মুক্তি দিন।

আমরা জেলে থাকা কালে কাগজে পড়লাম হিন্দুদের মধ্যে যাঁরা মন্ত্রী হয়েছেন তাঁরা কেবল রাজনৈতিক বন্দীদের দুঃখে গদগদ হয়ে, বিগলিত হয়ে এই কঠিন কাজটা করেছেন। এজন্য তাঁদের অনেক স্বার্থ ত্যাগ করতে হয়েছে। দেশের অনেক গালাগালি, নিন্দা, মাথা পেতে নিতে হয়েছে। আজ তাঁরা কি বলেন? ফেডারেল কোর্টের রায়ের পরে প্রভুদের কাছে কৈফিয়ৎ দেবারও ত সুযোগ মিলেছে; অতএব সিকিউরিটি বন্দীদের সকলকে অন্ততঃ মুক্তি দিন না।

আজ দেশ মৃত্যুপথযাত্রী। যেদিকে তাকাই দেখি কঙ্কালসার নরনারীর দল। কলকাতার রাস্তায় এদের ভীড়ে পথ চলা যায় না। মফঃস্বল গ্রামের অবস্থা আরো শোচনীয়। অন্নহীন, বস্ত্রহীন, শিক্ষাহীন, স্বাস্থ্যহীন কঙ্কালসার নরনারী সেখানে শ্মশানভূমিতে প্রেতের ন্যায় ঘুরে বেড়ায়। কলকাতার খবর কিছুটা খবরের কাগজে বার হয় কিন্তু এদের কথা কিছুমাত্র প্রকাশ পায় না। এরা নীরবে মরে। কত পল্লীর কত ঘরে লোক মরে পচে পড়ে আছে সৎকার হয় না। এমন দিনে বেকটা লোক দেশে মানুষের মত মানুষ, যারা দুঃখীজনের জন্য চোখের জল ফেলে সর্ব্বস্ব উৎসর্গ করে, তাদের আমরা অকারণে আটকে ধরে দেব? আমাদেরই এ পার্লামেণ্টের সদস্যদের নিতান্ত বেআইনীভাবে আটকে রেখে দেব? ধিক্ আমাদের পার্লামেণ্টে! লজ্জায়, ঘৃণায়, দুঃখে মনে হয় কবে এই পার্লামেণ্ট ধ্বংস হবে। ধিক আমাদের ইংরাজি বুলি কপচানোর! ধিক আমাদের নিজের বক্তৃতার বাহবা শোনার! এই ভুয়ো জিনিসের জন্য, এই কাঁটালের

আমলত্ব, সোণার পাথরের বাটীর জন্য দেশের লোকের রক্ত নিংড়ান ভুরি ভুরি অর্থ কেন ব্যয় হবে! কেন এসেম্বিলি হাউসের উপর বজ্রাঘাত হয় না! কেন বোমা পড়ে এ আরামশৌধ চূর্ণ-বিচূর্ণ হয়ে যায় না!

আজ দেশে যে আগুন জ্বলেছে তা নিবাবে কে? কে এ আগুন নিবাবার ক্ষমতা রাখে? আমাদের মত স্বার্থপর লোক, না দেশের শ্রেষ্ঠ সুসন্তান যাদের আমরা কারাগারে আটকে রেখেছি তারা! আমার নিজের জেলা নদীয়ার কথা ধরা যাক্। আজ নদীয়ার দুর্দ্দিনে সন্তপ্ত আর্ত্ত নদীয়া কাতরভাবে নদীয়ার জননেতা, ত্যাগী, সমাজসেবী কর্ম্মী শ্রীযুক্ত তারকদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের মুক্তি কামনা করছে, তার কর্ম্মকুশল হাতের সেবা চাইছে। কি কৈফিয়ৎ আছে তাঁকে আজও সিকিউরিটি বন্দী করে রাখবার!

অক্টোবর মাসে সিকিউরিটি বন্দী করার পাইকারী আদেশের পরে কিরূপভাবে যথেচ্ছা যাকে তাকে ২৬ ধারামতে আটক রাখা হয়েছে তার একটি দৃষ্টান্ত শুনুন। শ্রীযুক্ত মণিলাল দত্ত দশ বৎসরের জন্য সশ্রম কারাদণ্ডে দণ্ডিত হন। তিনি বহুদিন হ'তে কমিউনিষ্ট মতাবলম্বী। আলিপুর জেলে তিনি আছেন; তাঁর সাথে আমি এক সাথে ছিলাম। তাঁর মত আমি সবিশেষ জানি। তিনি বৃটিশ সরকারকে যুদ্ধে unconditional সাহায্য দেবার মত পোষণ করেন। তাঁর দশ বৎসরের কারাদণ্ডের মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ হল, কিন্তু এমনি ভাগ্য যে দীর্ঘ দশ বৎসর কারাভোগ করার পরেও তাঁকে মুক্তি দেওয়া হল না। এমন কি এক মুহূর্ত্তের জন্যও জেলগেটের বাইরে নিয়ে যাওয়া হল না। জেলের মধ্যেই ২৬ ধারামতে বিনা বিচারে আটক রাখা হল। তাঁর স্নেহকাতর পিতা তাঁর মুক্তির দিনের জন্য পথ চেয়ে অপেক্ষা করেছিলেন। তিনি এই খবরে এমন আঘাত পেলেন যে মারা গেলেন। মণিবাবুকে তাঁর পিতার শ্রাদ্ধে পর্য্যন্ত Parole যেতে দেওয়া হল না। এমন কি তাঁর দরখাস্তের সময়মত একটা জবাব পর্য্যন্ত দেওয়া হল না। মণিবাবুর সেদিনের দুঃখ আমি কোন দিন ভুলব না। এই রকম কত মণি বাবুর কত দুঃখ কারাগারের অন্তরালে পুঞ্জীভূত হয়ে জমে আছে! মনুষ্যত্বের দিক দিয়েও কি এ সম্বন্ধে বিচার করার নেই? মণিবাবু ত কোন অপরাধমূলক কিছুই করেন নি। তিনি ত কারাগারেই ছিলেন! মতও ত তাঁর সুস্পষ্ট; তবুও দীর্ঘ দশ বৎসর পরে তিনি বাইরে আসতে পারলেন না কেন? বৃটিশ সাম্রাজ্য কি তা হ'লে ধ্বংস হয়ে যেত? ফ্যাসিজমকে আমরা ঘৃণা নিশ্চয়ই করি। বৃটিশ সরকারের বহু পূর্ব্বেই কংগ্রেস এর বিরুদ্ধে জেহাদ ঘোষণা করেছেন; কিন্তু বৃটিশ প্লুটোক্রাসীর সাম্রাজ্য পরিচালনার এই নীতিই বা আমরা সমর্থন করি কি করে? এতে ক আছে আমাদের ভালবাসবার? (Hear Hear.)

সেদিন অনারেবল মন্ত্রী মহাশয় পাইন বললেন অনেক স্বার্থত্যাগ করে তাঁরা মন্ত্রী হয়েছেন। [illegible] মুক্তির জন্য ব্যাকুল হয়েই তাঁরা এই কাজ করেছেন। বেশ কথা। এইবার তাঁরা অন্ততঃ সিকিউরিটি বন্দীদের মুক্তি দিন। আর তা যদি তাঁরা না পারেন তাহলে আমরা করজোড়ে নিবেদন করছি অনেক হয়েছে আর তাঁদের স্বার্থত্যাগের প্রয়োজন নেই। (Laughter.)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the subject matter of today's adjournment motion is not exactly a demand for release of all the security prisoners merely because their release is necessitated by the serious state of affairs through which the province is passing today. The adjournment motion draws the attention of the House to one serious state of administration which is prevalent in this province. The question

of detention of the security prisoners under Rule 26 came before the High Court and went up to the Federal Court. It is true that after the judgment of the Federal Court a validating ordinance has been passed which the Federal Court by a majority has decided as legal, but we are considering the cases of detention of political prisoners under rule 129 in the first instance which by an *ad hoc* order of the Bengal Government were translated into cases under rule 26. There the Federal Court has held that the detention of such persons is entirely illegal.

Now, Sir, when those persons were released under orders of the High Court, we had that unique demonstration of the superiority of the executive over the judiciary even in 1943. It was a High Court created by British Statute which held that the detention of certain persons was illegal. Before those persons had an opportunity of leaving even the court room they were arrested under Regulation III. The question which the Hon'ble the Home Minister has got to answer is—under whose orders this order of Regulation III was actually given effect to? The case was then going on in the High Court: the High Court had not yet pronounced the judgment. Who was it that initiated the proposal that if the High Court's judgment went in favour of the accused, then the accused must be clapped behind the prison bar under Regulation III? At that time the Home Minister I suppose was not in Calcutta; the Governor of the province was not in Calcutta. The question which Bengal wants to put to the Home Minister, whom I believe Mr. Siddiqi described as the defender of human liberty, is a very simple one: Was this order under Regulation III initiated or approved by the Home Minister or was it initiated and approved by the Secretariat or by the Governor with which order the Minister had nothing to do? We want a specific answer to these questions. If he says it was done in spite of him, then he should come out of office and expose the hollowness of the present constitution. If he says that he did it himself, then we ask him, claiming as he does to be the representative of the people of this province, under what law did he as Home Minister feel justified that persons who were yet to be released under orders of the Calcutta High Court were to be clapped behind the prison bar under Regulation III? We would like to have a precise answer from the Home Minister on this very important question.

The next question is this. The Federal Court held—and this is a point which must not be lost sight of by members of the House—that not only was the detention of these particular persons who were subsequently transferred under Regulation III illegal but the arrest of all persons since the *ad hoc* order of October, 1942, was illegal. That is a question which again I bring to the notice of the Home Minister. There are today in prison in Bengal a large number of persons whose detention the Federal Court has directed is illegal. Are we living within the framework of a civilised Government? We are told that many things are happening today in countries which are under the control of Nazi Government. Now, what is the farce that is going on in Bengal? You have today your system of administration. You have your judiciary. The highest court in India has held that the detention of certain persons is utterly illegal. Some of them, I know, are being clapped

behind the prison bar under Regulation III, but there are lots of others who are still detained under Rule 26 as before. How is that possible? Why is this deliberate flouting of the decision of the highest court of the land? Here again I ask the Home Minister, is it being done by him, or has he protested? Has the Ministry protested and has that protest been overruled by the Governor of the province? How are things happening? Has the Home Minister himself taken the responsibility of declaring that these persons shall not be released but shall continue to remain under unlawful detention?

Now, Sir, this is the language of the Judges of the Federal Court to which my attention has just been drawn: "It would be difficult to conceive of a more callous disregard of the provisions of the law and of the liberty of the subject". This is not a speech delivered by a Congressman or a Mahashavite or a political agitator, but this is a judgment of the Chief Justice and Judges of the highest Judicial Tribunal in the country; and you have these persons still detained under the orders of the Bengal Government. What answer has Sir Nazimuddin to give to this?

Now, I can well appreciate, it having been my good fortune or misfortune to have served as a Minister for nine months, that there are tremendous obstacles when even the best of Ministers with the best of intentions wants to do something which he considers to be vitally necessary in the supreme interests of the country but he is prevented from doing the right. The question of illegal detention, the question of release of persons whom responsible Ministers consider it desirable or expedient to release are questions which are to be decided by superior powers reigning within the framework of a provincial constitution in India. I ask Sir Nazimuddin to take the House into his confidence. When the new Ministry came into office there were lots of propaganda; lots of kite-flying went on. There are some Hindu Ministers who joined the Ministry, as we have been reminded by the previous speaker, mainly for the sake of political prisoners. They declared that they were doing so mainly for releasing Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose or at least bringing him back to Bengal.

What I am asking Sir Nazimuddin is this: in respect of these particular matters what has been the policy of Sir Nazimuddin as Home Minister? What has been the policy of the Ministry as a whole, and if I may add what is the policy of the Ministerial Party supporting the present Ministry? Why should we not be able to join hands with regard to this vital question? Why should it not be possible for us to say unitedly that we want these persons who have been declared by the High Court and the Federal Court to have been detained unlawfully to be released immediately? If later on Sir Nazimuddin feels as a responsible Home Minister that they should be again rearrested, let a case be made out and let him consider each case on its merits and let him decide what should be done. Why this attempt to flout deliberately the decision of the highest tribunal in the country? What is the reason? Is he a party to it or is it being forced on him and on the Ministry over which he is presiding as the Chief Minister?

Now, Sir, as regards the general question of the release of security prisoners, which is also relevant in this connection, I do associate myself with every word that the previous speakers have uttered. These persons were arrested and detained at a time when there was a political upheaval in this country and in this province. Times have changed; today it is essential that there must be a proper atmosphere created in every part of the province. We are today in the midst of a terrible catastrophe and one does not know what is going to happen to this province during the next two months. We want today the pooling of all resources of men and materials who will be able to work together for the purpose of saving their beloved motherland. I believe the Home Minister will not contradict me when I say that representations have come to him and to the Governor of this Province sent by the security prisoners offering their unconditional support with regard to the carrying out of relief measures, if they are released. Even today two political prisoners came and saw me and they told me how those representations were sent some time ago. Some of them were anxious to meet Sir Nazimuddin. The main question which I would ask Sir Nazimuddin is this: Is it not a fact that he has received representations from security prisoners who are anxious to come out of the prison cells? They are receiving harrowing tales of the distress of their own families and of persons surrounding them. They want to come out to save their own families, to serve their own countrymen. Why is it that they are being detained? I ask again: is it because the Home Minister thinks that they should be detained that they are being detained, or are they being detained because the Secretariat, Porter, Baker, Ray and Company, think that these persons should be detained and should not be released. Truth should come out. We would like to know whether Sir Nazimuddin rules over the Home Department or, as before, permanent officials rule over the Department. Let him come out with the answers. Let him say "although I have received such requests, I do not trust these men, I am not going to release them, because they are dangerous." Let him say so, let him take the responsibility. On the other hand, if he says "I am prepared to trust and release them, but I am being prevented to release them by higher authorities," let him declare his helplessness, let him take the House into confidence.

Sir, one word more and I have done, and that is about the question of the allowances of the security prisoners. These security prisoners are remaining behind the prison bar. The Home Minister declared that he has accepted it to be his policy that he would grant generous allowances to the security prisoners. I have been receiving during the last fortnight most pathetic letters from the security prisoners stating circumstances under which their families are passing their days and nights. Letters have come to the Home Minister. I do not know how long will he take to deal with them separately. Is it too much to expect from him that he would give some kind of *ad hoc* order like the *ad hoc* order under which they were arrested illegally and detained? Let him pass such an *ad hoc* order and say that every security prisoner will have his family allowance doubled at

least for six months to come pending fuller consideration of each case. Is it impossible to do that? We have received letters for help and support of their families and the letters were sent to the Home Minister. Some help we are offering from our own resources, but it is the bounden responsibility of Government to see to it that the families of those persons illegally detained, as pointed out by the highest Tribunal of this country, are not starved to death on account of the callous policy pursued by the Ministry now presiding over the destinies of Bengal.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at this moment I am not thinking of the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin, the bureaucrat of bureaucrats and also the diplomat of diplomats who, on the eve of ministry making, held out many big promises and the release of political prisoners one of them. I am at this moment thinking of those friends of mine, the Hon'ble Mr. T. C. Goswami, the Hon'ble Mr. B. P. Pain, Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty, Mr. Atul Chandra Kumar and Mr. Jatindra Nath Chakrabarty, but I do not find some of them here now. I am thinking of these friends who shed bucketful of tears over the woes and sufferings of our brethren behind the prison bar. I am thinking particularly of Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty whose stentorian voice we have heard in the past in the parks of Calcutta day in and day out over the sufferings and woes of our brethern behind the prison bar. Do they realise what a monstrosity they are going to perpetrate today? Some of our own people who love their country too well have been arrested and detained and denied the elementary right, namely, the right to trial in a properly constituted court of law. They have been clapped in prison under what has rightly been called a lawless law. Some of my honourable friends must know that the liberal politician John Morley in his "Memoirs" had to say something about this lawless law. Referring to the arrest and detention of Srijut Aswini Kumar Dutt, Krishna Kumar Mitra and five others in the swadeshi days Mr. Morley as Secretary of State for India wrote to Lord Minto who was then the Governor-General of India: "My Lord, I beseech you to avoid one thing, namely, the trial of a single person in his absence. That has an ugly Austrian-Russian look." If Morley were to write today, he would perhaps have written: "It has an ugly Nazi-Fascist look". (Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: An ugly English look.) I wonder if Morley would write "an ugly English look." Now this Government are not merely applying this lawless law to the people of Bengal but even they are deliberately defying the order of the highest Court in the land which has declared that the procedure under which it has been applied has been wrong and therefore the prisoners should be released. What can be a greater monstrosity than this? By committing this monstrous act this Government have lost the right to call themselves a civilised and liberal Government. They have lost the right to call themselves a popular Government. Unless they change their barbarous policy, they forfeit the right to govern.

With these words, I commend this motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are talking this afternoon in a spirit of unreality. The first two speeches, Sir, did not

come out of the heart. The honourable member for the University of Calcutta did put some venom in the debate and in his usual manner brought in a number of arguments which were, from my point of view, extraneous and not germane to the motion before the House. But taking him at his own words, I am rather surprised that he, in his stentorian voice, called upon the Hon'ble Home Minister to do this, that and the other and answer a thousand and one questions. I should like to know where was he when they walked over the dead body of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, into the Cabinet. Was he taken away under a lawful law or was he removed under a lawless law? (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: He was arrested before we entered the Cabinet.) Why did you go in at all? You had the audacity to enter the Cabinet after that——(Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Because he wanted us to continue.) (Uproar.) (Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: We entered the Cabinet with Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's blessings and support.) (Uproar. Sir, the Hon'ble ex-Minister for Local Self-Government has also associated himself with this debate. If they had any conscience, if they had any sense of honesty, they would not show their faces in this House today. (Uproar. Who sent these people to jail? For nine months the honourable member for the University of Calcutta stuck to office and his other collegues stuck several months longer. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: You ask your friends to resign.) (Uproar.) I know that. You need not tell me anything more. This kind of unreality, this kind of false advocacy of a cause which you have created, is disgraceful to the name of a gentleman, disgraceful to the name of Indian liberty and freedom. (Uproar.) Talking of liberty and freedom and quoting Mr. Siddiqi here and there will not help. My conscience is clear. (Uproar.) I have not played double with people who are unfortunately now in jail. "When I was a Minister everything that came from Delhi, from the Government House or from the Secretariat, I took it on my head but if others do so, they are, of course denationalised, unfit to rule and unfit to do a thousand and one things". I ask a question of the ex-Minister sitting opposite—who sent them to jail? Where were you? Why did you not resign? What are you now talking about? You are out of court. You are unfit to utter one word about these things.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Nonsense.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I repeat that, Sir, with all the emphasis that I can command. I must say that these people have started a sort of *natak* to be called "nationalists" and the worst of it is that they claim a monopoly in nationalism. There are people who are more honest, who are clearer in their consciences and who want to help these people genuinely and as best as they can. In order to support their arguments, they talk of the constitution, they talk of the High Courts for which I have not very great respect because two judges take one view and one takes the other. The Calcutta High Court decisions are upset by the Federal Court and the Federal Court decisions may be upset by the Privy Council. We have to bow to the decision you gave but I still beg to repeat that *sub judice* begins when a case starts and it ends when the Barristers and the Vakils have filled their pockets and the matter decided without any chance of a further appeal. Sir

it is surprising that these upholders of law, which they call lawless law get up to-day and tell laymen like me that the permission to appeal granted by the Federal Court, does not necessarily mean that there will be an appeal. How can they——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is all irrelevant.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I bow to your decision Sir, and I would like to suggest that the cases of our colleagues of this Assembly who have lost their liberty, the cases of citizens who have lost their liberty, are in safer hands now than they were in the hands of a lot that has brought us to our present miserable position. The honourable member from the Calcutta University could not escape the obsession that has taken possession of his brain. If he can bring in the Governor, if he can bring in the permanent Officials his vendetta, he thinks, goes a stage higher.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Go on flattering them, the door is open.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I do not flatter them I did not lick the boots of the Governor and the Permanent Officials (Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: You are under the boot).

Mr. SPEAKER: Will you kindly confine yourself to the issue before the House?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I bow to your ruling, Sir, I need not do *khushamad*. I need not run about the corridors of the Government House and the Secretariat swallowing every bit that fell as an *akashvani*——

Mr. SPEAKER: No more of these things. Let us come to the point.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I submit to your ruling. (Interruption.)

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: He is talking rubbish.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Is that correct? The speaker's ear need not hear as his eye need not catch. I submit, Sir, that if you wish me to sit down, I shall do so. If you allow others to speak as they like, I think I may also claim your indulgence.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know that there have been some speeches made from this side of the House often bringing in matters which are not strictly relevant to the point at issue.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: And yet they were allowed to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: But as they introduced these things incidentally I allowed them. I am not controlling you and I am not asking you not to reply to those things but if you dilate on them exclusively, leaving aside the point at issue, then I have to say that all that is irrelevant.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I again bow to your ruling, but may I draw your attention to one point which is the object of this motion for

adjournment and that is to malign us. (Cries of "No, no" from the Opposition Benches). There is no man in this House, Sir, who would like to deal with this problem with the unity that the honourable member for the University demands. If there is this unity he will find me as one of his important Lieutenants but if the Mussalman is a——

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Who said so? (Interruption.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, will you please ask Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi to withdraw that expression?

Mr. SPEAKER: If such a statement were to be made by any member in this House, certainly I would take all necessary steps to see that it did not find a place in the records. I have not heard any man here uttering any such expression and therefore, I think, Mr. Siddiqi, it was not quite proper for you to introduce an expression which was never uttered.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED: It was Mr. Siddiqi who uttered this and therefore, he must be asked to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: That statement will not be printed. It will be expunged from the records.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: These words, Sir, were not used but the meaning behind the speeches was that. I demand my right to say what I like and in the manner I like, so long as I do not break the rules of debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, will you kindly sit down for a minute? It was far from my mind to stop you from speaking.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: You are doing so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Siddiqi, if you use an expression which has not been used by anybody else in this House and if you attribute that expression to others, I have a right to intervene but you now said that the purport of the speeches made was that the Musalman is a——. I say with all the emphasis and dignity that I can command and I think the whole House is with me when I say that nobody has uttered that expression and I will never tolerate directly or indirectly any expression from anybody which purports to cast any reflection on any community, Hindu or Muslim. And I think nobody has uttered any expression like that and therefore it is not right on your part to do so.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. I should like to know whether a member is entitled to put his interpretation on the speeches that are delivered by other speakers. Then, the member concerned has a right to explain himself that he did not mean that. Mr. Siddiqi did not claim that the word had been used but that was the idea conveyed to him from the speeches made by the gentlemen opposite. I think, Sir, Mr. Siddiqi was entitled to say this and you as Speaker who is the custodian of the rights and privileges of the House should protect the rights of Mr. Siddiqi to interpret the speeches in the manner in which he has done.

If Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee or any other member were to get up and say "I did not say that; I did not mean that", then Mr. Siddiqi would have accepted that explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: He has never named any member; he made a general reflection on the speeches of the other side. And I here standing as the custodian of the rights and privileges of the House have got every right to say that no speech could be interpreted in that perverse manner.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I bow to your decision, Sir, but, unfortunately, perversity is not my monopoly and therefore——

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: What is the meaning of that—will you please explain to the House?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. My esteemed friend has now made a sinister reflection on the Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: You may, but I am not going to take the expression used by Mr. Siddiqi as directed against myself. (Laughter.)

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I have used a strong expression of opinion, and the honourable member from Murshidabad has thrown a meaning into my expression which is not in it. You, Sir, were good enough to call my expression as perverse and I said that perversity was not my monopoly. It could not possibly mean that it was intended for the Chair. It may have been intended for others in this House.

The whole line of my thought has been disturbed, Sir——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about the political prisoners?—Not a word about them yet!

(At this stage the blue light was lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, much of your time has been wasted and your time is going to be up. So you must come back to your point.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I am most anxious in my own humble way to serve the cause of my Indian fellow countrymen who have lost their liberty. In the first place the honourable member for the University of Calcutta will realise that there is a thing called the Government of India Act which places us at a terrible handicap. Over and above that, there is that dangerous law called the Defence of India Act. More than that, Sir, you will agree with me at least in this that once a thing is spoiled it takes twice the effort to mend it. Our friends left things in such a terrible condition, our friends put so many people into jails without trial, without even going into the details of the cases, that it has become almost impossible, if not superhuman, for the present Minister to put matters right. Instead of asking questions of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to-day, it would have been better——

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about the time limit, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: He was interrupted for a time and so I have allowed him two or three minutes more.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Thank you, Sir.

He could have done a better service to Bengal if he had turned to his old Chief, about whose persuasion into resignation has been made a major constitutional issue. They still wanted to stick to office. Instead of asking whether there were Porters, Carters and Bakers, he should have asked of him "What did he do?", "How did he manage it?", "Whether he took decisions in individual cases or whether the Governor interfered with his decisions?"

(At this stage the member again reached the extra time limit given to him but was allowed to conclude his speech.)

One word more, Sir, and I have finished. May I honestly and sincerely appeal to them to forget the political prisoners for the time being? They, I repeat again, are in the hands of a man who has released the largest number of political prisoners.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:——and also imprisoned the largest number of them.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, after the speech of Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi who has so thoroughly met the points of the speakers of the Opposition, I think I have very little to say. I am sure that by now the members of this House and the people of the province will realise from the speeches which have been made in support of this motion that this motion is designed merely to be a political clap-trap because, Sir, if I may repeat again the argument of Mr. Siddiqi, the persons who have today taken a leading part in the debate are the persons who were largely responsible for sending a large number of persons to jails——

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: I have sponsored the motion, Sir, and I have never gone in for the Ministry.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The interruption of Mr. Jogesh Chandra Gupta raises a new thing. May I remind him that it was his leader who was responsible for setting up the previous Ministry? May I remind him that he and his party gave consistent support to the late Ministry who sent the largest number of persons to jail. They were not prepared——

Mr. I. D. JALAN: On a point of order, Sir. Are we discussing what the past Ministry did or are we discussing why the political prisoners, in view of the judgments of the Calcutta High Court and the Federal Court to release them, have not been released? I find that the speeches are being confined to what the previous Ministry did. I think the Hon'ble the Chief Minister owes an explanation to the House as to why these prisoners are still being kept in jails.

Mr. SPEAKER: I can see the force of the point of order raised by Mr. Jalan, but at the same time I am bound to state that when this motion was moved, speeches were made with regard to the release of political

prisoners generally. That having been allowed, these things become relevant, but that, I consider, must not be made the main consideration. The main point for consideration is that release has not been effected pursuant to orders of the High Court and the Federal Court; so far as other points are concerned certainly I will allow him to develop his argument.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, three-fourths of the speeches of the honourable members opposite were confined to the actions of the Ministers generally and only one-tenth, if not less than that, was used with regard to their release. I think it is quite pertinent to refer to the actions of the past Ministry because after all I find that very conveniently the Leader of the Opposition has not taken any part in the debate——

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I will speak after you have finished.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, the various strictures that have appeared in the judgment either of the Federal Court or of the High Court refer to the action of the Ministry when the Leader of the Opposition was in charge and it was he who was responsible for giving approval and sanction to the procedure which has been so generally criticised and attacked.

Now, Sir, before I deal with the main point let me again point out what this Ministry has done. I maintain that there is no previous record—at least so far as India is concerned—where the Ministry deliberately released members of the Opposition just before a session of the House, so that they may come and attack the Ministry. Sir, my friend Mr. Basu enquired as to what I have done so far as members of this House are concerned. I am sure he ought to know by now the number of members of this House who have been released and that these releases were effected on the eve of the session and not after—always before the commencement of the session. (Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: But ten times more have not been released.) One of the most moving speeches in this House today was made by a member who was made a security prisoner by the previous Government and released by us and thus enabled by us to be put in a position to make a speech and he belongs to a party which supported incarceration in jail.

Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY: এই রকম ভাবে কেন ছাড়ছেন? ভাল কাজই করছেন। তবে এক কানে ছেড়ে দিলেই ত ভাল হয়।

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am glad that there is even this very minute little admission that it is good work that we have done and even that coming from my friends opposite is something.

But, Sir, the question is that as far as this judgment of the Federal Court is concerned, it refers only to the eight prisoners against whom appeals were filed. (Cries of "No" "No" from the Opposition benches.) It is no use for the honourable members saying "No". Our legal advisers have said that.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Have you read the judgment yourself?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Part of it.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Their advice was quite wrong and in each case they have been wrong and we have been right.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as our legal advisers are concerned, the Federal Court referred to the judgment of those against whom appeals have been filed and out of those eight persons two have been released. This shows that when we are satisfied that releases can be made without jeopardising the safety of the province, releases are made. As far as the other security prisoners are concerned, they have got a right to move *habeas corpus* petition and we undertake not only to forward it but to give them legal facilities for consultation before and during the pendency of the *habeas corpus* petition before the court.

Sir, no court, either the High Court or the Federal Court, has pronounced any opinion as regards the merits of the detention of these persons, that is to say, on account of certain technical flaws in the procedure, the detention has been declared illegal. But the question I would like to ask the members opposite—Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has asked many questions and in return I only ask one question. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Without answering mine!) Do they realise why these persons are detained and do they realise what is the risk to this province if these persons are released? (Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Nil.) It means assistance to enemy who may invade our province.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Certainly not.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: It is a great calumny. They will fight much more with any aggressor.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, we expect some sense from the Chief Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is quite sense to him and to a large section of the House.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am surprised at the members taking this attitude that there is no justification for their detention. I cannot understand how the members opposite can say so when they themselves were responsible for putting them there. In December, 1941, when we gave up office, the number of security prisoners was 300, but when we resumed office again, the number of security prisoners had risen to about 1,500. So, 1,200 more persons were placed in detention in the mean time. May I ask, why, if you knew that everyone of them was innocent, did you place these persons under detention? Is it your point that there was some justification for putting them under detention? If so, what ground have you got to say that that justification does not exist now? (A voice from the Opposition benches: Disturbances are over.) As far as disturbances are concerned, those gentlemen belonged to the subversive movement. As far as

Congress pure and simple as a political organisation is concerned, the majo portion of them have been released by us. (Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY Question.) I am absolutely correct. As far as members of the subversiv organisations are concerned, they would not have been put under detentio but for the fact that they belonged to subversive organisations and thei subversive activities were there. May I ask those gentlemen: Did you pu them under detention knowing that they were innocent? I maintain an I take full responsibility for this—I am not one of those who do not tak responsibility. I have had the advantage of discussing not only wit officials and the Deputy Inspector-General, Intelligence Branch, but I hav had the advantage of discussing with some of the leaders of the variou subversive organisations and I have gone to great lengths in trying to con vince myself whether there was any justification or not. I may state tha when we came into office first in 1937 the number was between 2,500 an 3,000. We released everyone of them in 1937. When again we starte re-arresting some of them, it was done with utmost care and whatever ma be said about the procedure since 1942, in my time arrests were not mad until my previous approval was taken and cases of persons discussed. I ma state, as I have stated before, that I had refused to put under arrest member of the Jugantar Party. It is only when I was in Hazaribagh that the then Home Minister agreed to their arrest. Sir, I maintain that I take particula care and wherever possible and whenever cases are brought to my notice, I try to go into them. As far as these cases are concerned, the procedure adopted has been declared by the High Court and the Federal Court to be not correct, and we are taking steps to review all the cases according to the procedure which would be approved by the Court. Wherever we will find that persons should be released, I can assure the House that those persons will be released. We are trying to expedite their releases, but members must realise that there is a constant propaganda going on from Saigon and other places calling upon persons here to try to be active so far as sabotage is concerned. They must realise that they are trying to have contacts with their local agents and the honourable members know that there are persons here like Mr. Jaiprakash Narain who had actually been in Calcutta recently, and I think most of you know that he had been trying to organise——

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: How do we know?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Most of you know unofficially.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Then why is it that he was not arrested?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Because the information was received by us after he had left Calcutta. We would not have allowed him to leave Calcutta if we had got timely information.

Sir, I can say this much that there are members of the Congress organisation whom nobody would have ever dreamt of being active and who were active, and we knew that they were active. It was admitted by the members of the Congress that this was so. Our information is not wrong. (Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: We cannot understand that.) Mr. Jogesh Chandra Gupta may not understand that, but there are many people who

understand. Please don't think that all of them can be released without jeopardising the safety of the province. Why is it that the members of the Communist party were being attacked? Who were those people who were attacking and why were they attacking? The Mahasabha and the Muslim League members do not make murderous attacks against each other. Why is it that murderous attacks were launched upon the Communist party members in Dacca, Mymensingh and Narayanganj? It was because these people advocated support to the war effort.

Sir, as I have said, Government are reviewing the cases of individual prisoners and according to a recent decision, we will have to review all the cases and wherever possible we shall release them.

(Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq rose to speak.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the question be now put.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I am trying to explain——

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. It is the tradition of this House that after the Chief Minister has spoken, no other member of this House will be allowed to speak, even if he be the Leader of the Opposition. I think you, Sir, as Speaker and as custodian of the rights and privileges of this House will not allow it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Fazlul Huq, why did you not speak before?

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Because I thought that the issue before the House is so simple that Sir Nazimuddin would be able to understand it——

Mr. SPEAKER: No speech is necessary.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, let the question be now put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to know, Mr. Fazlul Huq, why you did not speak so long. On a debate like this it was expected that you would speak, but you did not speak. You are now asking my permission to speak. Why should I use my discretion in your favour?

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Let the question be now put.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, in course of his speech Sir Nazimuddin made certain observations regarding the late Ministry which require to be explained to this House. It is for this reason that I ask your leave to make a very brief statement explanatory of the position of the previous Ministry.

Mr. SPEAKER: Frequent references have no doubt been made to the last Ministry. I think in his speech Sir Nazimuddin made a direct reference to the last Home Minister and therefore I allow you to explain very briefly.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of order, Sir. The closure has been moved——

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: I am also on a point of order, Sir. (Uproar.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Yes, Sir Nazimuddin.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, may I submit humbly that the closure has been moved and you have got the right to reject it if you think that it has not been fully discussed. I submit that I began to speak only when no other member rose to speak. If you are satisfied that the matter has not been fully discussed, then you can reject it; otherwise you ought to accept it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am absolutely convinced that the matter has been fully discussed, not only fully discussed, but many matters not quite relevant to the issue have been raised, and I have allowed them. The Opposition made references incidentally and the Government side made direct references. It was an important inter-connected matter. Now, it is not that I am going to allow Mr. Fazlul Huq to make a speech or to introduce any new matter whatsoever. What I am going to say is that when direct reference has been made to him, he was perfectly justified to speak. It was his option to rise to speak on a matter like this or not, but when direct reference has been made from this side and after that not one member has spoken from the Opposition, I think it is only fair that he should be allowed just to submit his explanation not by way of attacking anybody, or by way of a speech, but just by way of a personal explanation.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: But what about the closure motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: After Mr. Fazlul Huq finishes, I shall consider that.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Sir Nazimuddin is a Barrister-at-law but not a lawyer——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I cannot allow that. That is not the point. What is your personal explanation?

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The issue before the House is whether in view of the judgment delivered by the Calcutta High Court and the Federal Court——(Uproar).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I said that the issue was whether in view of the judgments of the Calcutta High Court and of the Federal Court these political prisoners should still be detained in prison. I submit, therefore, ——(Interruption).

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Fazlul Huq, will you please resume your seat?

I am surprised to see that whenever Mr. Fazlul Huq has risen to speak, obstruction is being placed. I say at once that I will not tolerate any obstruction in the way of either the Leader of the House or the Leader of the Opposition. You all know that above all rules there is this convention that at any stage or at any time the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition are entitled to make a statement and therefore I hope that

members will keep silent when the Leader of the Opposition makes his personal explanation. The moment he goes astray or out of order, I will certainly call him to order.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I respectfully draw your attention to this? (Cries of "sit down, sit down" from the Opposition benches.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed Mr. Siddiqi to make his submission.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I have been disturbed by your new ruling. First of all, you said that you allowed Mr. Fazlul Huq to offer his personal explanation. (Interruption.) I respectfully submit I want to understand your ruling. Now, the second time you gave your ruling you were good enough to tell us that Mr. Fazlul Huq was speaking in his right as the Leader of the Opposition. May I know in which capacity he is speaking?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, Mr. Siddiqi, that of all persons you should rise on a point like this. The point is this. I have allowed Mr. Fazlul Huq to speak by way of personal explanation and not to speak as Leader of the Opposition. But as there was so much interruption, I pointed out the convention to the House. Even at this stage, if I so desired, I could have allowed him to speak as Leader of the Opposition.

Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: Let us hear him.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Thank you. Sir, as I was submitting to the House, the issue really was whether in view of these two admissions, these political prisoners should still be detained in custody. In that view of the matter, whether under the previous Government the number of prisoners was 1,500 while under the regime previous to that the number was only 315 or what the number is is utterly irrelevant. The natural conclusion from the judgment of the Federal Court is that these political prisoners should be released forthwith. (Interruption.) I submit what the previous Ministry did may be absolutely wrong. That is not the point at issue now. Sir Nazimuddin says that the Federal Court judgment has completely upset practically the High Court judgment. I ask him, Sir, if that is the case and if that is the opinion of the Government legal advisers, why should he ask for leave to appeal to the Privy Council?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt you. I think that the matter has been sufficiently discussed.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: May I ask one question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Why put a question at this stage? The question before the House is the closure motion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: As there is no other speaker, you may put the adjournment motion itself and not the closure motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: If that is the desire of the House I have no objection.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: We have no objection to that.

The adjournment motion of Mr. Jogesh Chandra Gupta that the business of the Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the failure of the Bengal Government to set at liberty persons purported to have been detained under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules in spite of the decision of the Calcutta High Court and the recent decision of the Federal Court of India declaring the procedure adopted by the Bengal Government regarding detention as contrary to law and improper, was then put and a division called.

(After the ringing of the bell was over and order was given by Mr. Speaker to close the doors, the following interjections took place.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have seen four or five persons entering the Chamber after your order to close the doors.

Mr. SPEAKER: I saw only Mr. Sahabe Alam entering the Chamber after my order to close the doors; the others entered just in time.

Mr. Sahabe Alam, will you please walk out?

(Mr. Sahabe Alam left the Chamber.)

The adjournment motion was then put to vote and a division taken, with the following result:—

AYES—62.

Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Banerji, Mr. P.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chattopadhyay, Mr. Haripada.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Das, Babu Radhanath.
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Datta, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, Mr. A. K.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jalan, Mr. I. D.
Jonab Ali Majumder, Maulvi.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall.
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukerji, Mr. Dhirendra Narayan.
Mukherjee, Mr. S.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.
Wallur Rahman, Maulvi.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

NOES—111.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna).
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi.

Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed (Noakhali).
Abdul Metaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rashid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. (Howrah).
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Abul Masud, Kazi.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Barma, the Hon'ble Mr. Premhari.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Edbar, Mr. Upendranath.
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhut Bano Khanam, Begum.
Faziul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Faziur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Faziur Rahman, Mr. (Mymensingh).
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E.
Gomes, Mr. R. A.
Goswami, the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Haywood, Mr. Rogers.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Hodge, Mr. H. R.
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E.
Jalaluddin Ahmad, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Lelak, Mr. John.
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. (Bogra).
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Maulvi (Tippera).
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Mandal, the Hon'ble Mr. Jogendra Nath.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur.
Mohsin Ali, Mr. Md.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi.
Mukerjea, the Hon'ble Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Pulin Behary.
Musharruff Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed.
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K.
Nazimuddin Khwaja, the Hon'ble Sir, K.C.I.E.
Nooruddin, Mr. K.
Pain, the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna.
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Raikut, Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji.
Salim, Mr. S. A.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Steven, Mr. J. W. R.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.
Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi.
Zillur Rahman Shah Choudhury, Maulvi.

The Ayes being 62, and the Noes 111, the motion was lost.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 5-55 p.m. till 2-30 p.m. on Friday, the 17th September, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 17th September, 1943, at 2-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 13 Hon'ble Ministers and 185 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Co-operative stores in Bengal.

*36. **Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing for 1940-41 and 1941-42—

(*i*) the names of Co-operative Stores functioning in Bengal;

(*ii*) the number of share-holders;

(*iii*) share capital subscribed;

(*iv*) working capital;

(*v*) total value of goods sold; and

(*vi*) net profit or loss earned?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what financial or other help was given by Government to them; and

(*ii*) whether any facility or preference was given to these Stores for selling articles at controlled rates?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the attempts of the Howrah Co-operative Stores Limited, for getting such preference or facility, have been turned down by the authorities at Howrah?

(*d*) Is it a fact that these Stores are meant for helping price-control and proper distribution of essential commodities at controlled prices?

(*e*) Do the Government contemplate to form such Stores and also to help such Stores where they exist?

Khan Bahadur A. F. M. ABDUR RAHAMAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Jogendra Nath Mondal): (*a*) (*i*) A list of such stores is laid on the Library Table.

	1940-41	1941-42.
(*ii*)	5,700	6,075
	Rs.	Rs.
(*iii*)	1,09,077	1,16,517
(*iv*)	1,80,956	1,90,166
(*v*)	5,10,815	6,92,999

(*vi*) Profit earned during the years 1940-41 and 1941-42 is Rs.10,088 and Rs.23,500 respectively.

(*b*) (*i*) No financial help is given. Help in the shape of technical advice and taking of stock is freely given.

(*ii*) Special facility and preference have been given in some cases.

(*c*) Yes, as supplies available did not admit of increasing the number of shops already approved.

(*d*) Primary objects of these societies are honest dealing and supplying of wholesome commodities at reasonable prices.

(*e*) Government is encouraging the formation of such Stores specially in view of the present emergency and is also helping the existing Stores in securing supply as far as practicable.

Collective fines.

*37. **Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) how the amount of collective fines are to be realised;

(*ii*) the persons on whom the amounts are to be levied;

(*iii*) the assessment for each such person; and

(*iv*) the time of realisation and the exemptions determined in each case?

(*b*) Are the fines imposed at the initiative and on the recommendation of the District Magistrate in every case?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether his approval or consent is obtained in each case, either previous to the imposition or subsequently?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what are the respective amounts of collective fines so far imposed and levied in different parts of Bengal up to the latest date for which figures are available; and

(*ii*) what are the respective number of individuals on whom the fines have been imposed in each case?

(*e*) How many of the persons assessed for such fines are—

(1) Hindus; and

(2) Muslims?

(*f*) Is it a fact that in a number of cases fines have been imposed on persons who had been absent from the places for a long time?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the maximum amounts assessed to be paid by one individual in each district in which collective fines have been imposed?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*)(*i*) The honourable member is referred to sub-section (*4*) of section 3 of the Collective Fines Ordinance, 1942.

(*ii*) The honourable member is referred to sub-section (*1*) of section 3 of the Collective Fines Ordinance, read with the explanation to that section, and to sub-section (*2*) of that section.

(*iii*) The principle upon which assessment is made is laid down in sub-section (*3*) of section 3 of the Collective Fines Ordinance to which the attention of the honourable member is invited. The compilation of detailed lists of assessees for each collective fine imposed would involve an expenditure of time and labour which I am not prepared to sanction.

(*iv*) The time of realisation is determined by the District Magistrate in each case; Government have not full details and their compilation would involve a disproportionate expenditure of time and trouble. Exemptions under sub-section (*2*) of section 3 of the Ordinance, in so far as they are made by Government, are duly notified, and I refer the honourable member to the relevant notifications.

(*b*) District Magistrates are now empowered to impose collective fines, under certain conditions and up to certain financial limits, by delegation under sub-section (*1A*) of section 3 of the Ordinance. In cases where fines have been imposed by Government, the recommendations of the District Magistrate and Commissioner have been obtained in each case.

(*c*) The approval or consent of the Minister in charge of the Home Department is not required in cases where the District Magistrates exercise powers delegated to them. In every other case his approval is obtained before the imposition of the fine.

(*d*)(*i*) I refer the honourable gentleman to the answer being given during the current session of the Assembly to question No. 38 by Mr. Atul Krishna Ghosh.

(*ii*) and (*e*) I have no details and their compilation would involve an amount of labour which would be disproportionate to the results obtained.

(*f*) Yes: in some cases.

(*g*) I will enquire and communicate the results to the honourable member when received.

Collective fines.

*38. **Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) in how many places in Bengal the Government has imposed collective fines; and

(*ii*) the amount imposed and realised in each place?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of withdrawing all the orders of collective fines all over Bengal?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin). (*a*) I refer the honourable member to the statement and copies of notifications which are laid on the Library Table.

Details of fines realised are not available.

(*b*) No, Sir.

Persons dealt with under Defence of India Rules in the district of Birbhum.

***39. Dr. SARAT CHANDRA MUKHERJI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing the number of persons—

(*i*) arrested;
(*ii*) convicted;
(*iii*) detained as security prisoners; and
(*iv*) under-trial prisoners since August, 1942, up to February 25, 1943, under the Defence of India Rules, in the district of Birbhum?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the—

(*i*) numbers;
(*ii*) names of convicted prisoners classified in I and II, and how many made C class?

(*c*) What are the names of the classified prisoners and their period of convictions?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to say what was the basis of the classification?

(*e*) Why Babu Jotish Lal Ghose of Sinthia was classified as a "C" class prisoner although the trying court gave him the Division II?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) to (*c*) A statement is laid on the Library Table.

(*d*) I refer the honourable member to the provisions of rule 617 of the Bengal Jail Code, Volume I, 7th edition, a copy of which is placed in the Library.

(*e*) No prisoner of the name appears to have been convicted in the district.

Imposition of ban on "Khadi Pratisthans".

***40. Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the present number of *khadi*-producing organisations that have been banned by the Government; and
(*ii*) whether the production of *khadi* has been stopped?

(*b*) Is it a fact that—

(*i*) these *khadi*-producing organisations used to provide many families in North Bengal and East Bengal; and
(*ii*) these organisations used to add general stock of cloth in the Province?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government contemplate to withdraw the ban to enable these organisations to produce *khadi* as usual?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*)(*i*) Details of associations declared unlawful or notified under the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, will be found in the notifications mentioned in the list laid on the Table, of which copies are in the *Calcutta Gazette* to be found in the Library.

(*ii*) and (*b*) I have no information.

(*c*) Does not arise.

List of Notifications referred to in reply to clause (a) (i) of starred question No. 40.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 21503-P., dated the 30th November, 1942.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 21806-P., dated the 18th December, 1942.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 47-P., dated the 5th January, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 49-P., dated the 6th January, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 73-P., dated the 7th January, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 275-P., dated the 22nd January, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 304-P., dated the 23rd January, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 780-P., dated the 22nd February, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 794-P., dated the 22nd February, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 913-P., dated the 27th February, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 914-P., dated the 27th February, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 986-P., dated the 6th March, 1943.

Home (Political) Department Notification No. 1040-P., dated the 6th March, 1943.

Supply of clothes, etc., to security prisoners.

*41. **Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date when six months of detention under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules were completed in case of Pandit Dharanath Bhattacharyya;

(*ii*) the date of his arrest under rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules; and

(*iii*) whether cloths, *punjabis*, *paijamas*, towels, *guenzey*, cap, etc., which became due to the security prisoners after the completion of the period of six months of detention were supplied to him by the jail authorities of the Presidency Jail up to 1st June, 1943?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*iii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*c*) What steps, if any, do the Government contemplate to take for the timely supply of the articles to the security prisoners?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*)(*i*) The 22nd April, 1943.

(*ii*) The 11th October, 1942. (Presumably the honourable member refers to his arrest under rule 129 and not rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules.)

(*iii*) A statement of articles supplied up to the 1st June, 1943, is laid on the Table.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Statement of articles supplied up to the 1st June, 1943, referred to in reply to clause (iii) of starred question No. 41.

Dhuties—5.
Bedsheets—2.
Towels—2.
Handkerchiefs—6.
Mosquito net—1.
Woollen wrapper—1.
Pillow—1.
Mattress—1.
Quilt—1.
Flannel shirts—2.
Shoe—1 pair.
Sandal—2 pairs.
Trouser—1 pair.
Shirts—4.
Guenzey (fatua)—3.
Socks—2 pairs.
Pillow covers—2.
Sital Pati—1.

Compensation paid for agricultural land requisitioned under Defence of India Rules.

*42. **Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DUTTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether the rate of compensation per acre determined on crop basis allowed to the

owners of immovable properties in respect of their agricultural lands, requisitioned under rule 75A of the Defence of India Rules, has been increased having regard to the abnormal rise in price of the agricultural lands?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the extent to which the rate is enhanced?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the present rate of compensation per acre; and

(*ii*) the rate of compensation prevailing in 1942, in Tippera, regarding—

(1) agricultural *nal* lands,

(2) *bhiti* lands where crops are grown,

(3) *chara* lands where also crops are grown,

(4) homestead lands, and

(5) *bagan* lands where there are fruit-bearing trees?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are considering the desirability of increasing the rate in the district of Tippera?

(*f*) If so, to what extent?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Compensation for agricultural land is paid on the basis of net profit which is calculated at 75 per cent. of the gross outturn of the land. The yield of each crop is calculated on the basis of available statistical information and is computed into cash at the price of the crop generally prevailing at the time of payment.

(*c*) Does not arise.

(*d*) (*i*) The rate of compensation varies with fluctuations of the prices of each crop in each locality.

(*ii*) (1) Rs. 100 per acre generally.

(2) to (5) Rs. 60 per acre generally.

(*e*) and (*f*) In view of the reply to (*b*) above, the questions do not arise.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there is a flat rate per acre prevailing in the year 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give us an estimate as to what was the rate that was paid in July, 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: With reference to answer (*d*)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he was satisfied that compensation was given at that rate in the district of Tippera?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Yes, Sir, that is the report of the District Officer.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make an enquiry as to whether compensation was paid at that rate?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I shall enquire.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister make an enquiry in order to determine what is the rate that is now paid in the year 1943?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I have already answered that and I have nothing more to add.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the price of paddy per maund in July, 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Point of privilege.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Sir, I rise on a point of privilege. I most respectfully draw your attention to the fact that yesterday when a member of this House entered the Chamber a few seconds later after the closing of the division you asked him to withdraw from the House, presumably in exercise of the powers under section 15 of the Rules of Business of the House. In this connection I beg to submit that as an effect of the withdrawal order under this rule the member who is ordered to withdraw shall absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting. If he is ordered to withdraw a second time, he may be directed to absent himself for any further period during the session. It appears that the punishment is meant only in cases of grossly disorderly conduct on the part of any member. It might be, Sir, that the member entered the Chamber yesterday a few seconds after the closing of the division through mere inadvertence and in that case, Sir, I submit that such punishment had been really a very heavy punishment. It is far from my mind to question the propriety of your order. We have so far noticed that you took recourse to that authority under that rule with utmost caution and restraint. I therefore request you to consider whether in cases like these it would not be better and desirable to ask the member not to record his vote or if he exercises his vote to reject it which you have the right to do, instead of asking him to withdraw from the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: It was never intended as a punishment. What was intended was that he would not be permitted to vote. I at once asked the Secretary of the Assembly as to what is the procedure under the

circumstances and I was told that the proper procedure is to ask the member to walk out of the House. That is what I did. I will look into the matter carefully and I will also consider your suggestion and I will see what ought to be the proper course under those circumstances.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: As far as I remember you asked him to leave the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be that the expression used was "leave". I do not remember the exact language used by me.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I presume, Sir, that you intended to ask the member to refrain from entering the House after the closing of the division.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: May I suggest that that part of the proceedings should be expunged?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think that would be the proper course.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: There is a misunderstanding, I think. It should be made clear that he was asked only not to participate in the vote and not asked to leave the House.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Let that be a part of the proceedings.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no doubt about it. I have made it abundantly clear that my intention was never to punish him, for it was through inadvertence that he entered the House. I never meant it as a punishment. What I intended was that his vote, if recorded, should be wrong and therefore I desired that he should not be in the House. As I have already said, I will look into the matter very carefully and see what should be the actual expression to be used under these circumstances.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: He could have voted second time. There was no bar.

SPECIAL MOTIONS.

On Food Situation.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move the following motion. This Assembly is of opinion——

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: On a point of order, Sir. Is it not proper that the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies should be present on a day like this?

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I suggest that during the absence of the Minister for Civil Supplies the House should stand adjourned.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the Opposition so think the House may be adjourned, but that will be so much loss of time on the part of the Opposition.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: In the meantime he will come.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Information has been sent to him for coming to the Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: I can tell you that Dr. Mookerjee may speak and there are Ministers, his colleagues, who will perhaps take note of the speech and do the needful.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I thought the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies was lying hidden somewhere between the Chief Minister and the Hon'ble Mr. Shahabuddin. I did not know that he was absent. On a matter like this the debate should not start until and unless the Minister is present.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas might have been under the impression that questions should last longer than they have actually done. Would you allow him to move this motion afterwards?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is another matter. If he comes, I may consider that question after Dr. Mookerjee has moved his motion. Dr. Mookerjee, are you not going to move your motion until the Minister for Civil Supplies comes?

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Let the House be adjourned for ten minutes. In the meantime intimation may be sent to the Minister.

(At this stage the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies entered the Chamber.)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I beg to move that—

"This Assembly is of opinion that the statement of the Civil Supplies Minister on the food situation is utterly disappointing and unsatisfactory. The policy pursued by the Ministry with regard to procurement and distribution of foodgrains and also in the matter of increasing production within the province has been completely unplanned and ineffective and has been responsible for a gradual deterioration of the situation leading to appalling famine conditions now prevalent in all parts of the province. Its latest action in promulgating price control of rice without making suitable provision for supplies has intensely aggravated the misery of the people. The Ministry has failed to discharge the elementary responsibility of any civilised Government by its failure to save human lives and to procure for the people essential commodities for their bare existence."

Sir, since the Assembly last discussed the food situation it has dangerously deteriorated and today it presents problems of a far-reaching character affecting the lives and welfare of millions of Bengal's population. The statement of the Civil Supplies Minister, as I have just now stated, is utterly unsatisfactory. It is empty-worded and visionless. Judged by actual results the food policy of Government has miserably failed. I shall

not refer to the personal abuses that Mr. Suhrawardy heaped upon me and others who are trying to alleviate human sufferings. Such attacks should be treated with the contempt they deserve. They are indeed the outcome of masterly incompetence and impudence. Mr. Suhrawardy has looked at men and things through the prism of his own mind and career, which I leave to others to depict in true colours. Today, Sir, we stand face to face before an unprecedented condition of misery and destitution throughout the length and breadth of this province. Time will not permit me to discuss detailed cases of sufferings which I leave to others especially coming from the countryside. Let me however emphasise that death roll mainly due to starvation and diseases following such starvation is rapidly increasing. Reports of suicide, desertion of families and children, of dead bodies lying uncared for are pouring in from different parts of Bengal. For days and weeks people were allowed to die on the streets of Calcutta and they were refused admission into hospitals although A.R.P. beds were lying vacant. This is one of the major scandals of the present Government. Now Government has partially opened the door of hospitals in Calcutta but this is yet to be done in the mufassal centres in all parts of the province. Only last week I was in Midnapore. In my presence there was the case of a person who came to have his food at a free kitchen and the very sight of food resulted in such a state of excitement that before the food could reach his mouth he lay there unconscious and never woke again. People complained that there were beds lying vacant in the hospital but men were allowed to die and lie sick in the streets of Midnapore. I made an enquiry of responsible officers. We were told that 40 beds in the Midnapore hospital must be kept reserved for A.R.P. purposes. Even the Collector had not the authority temporarily to place these beds at the disposal of those persons who stood in need of immediate help until Government passed orders to that effect.

Now Sir, in Contai, jackals and dogs have been freely feeding themselves on dead bodies and such animals were ordered to be shot. That was an instance which was brought to our notice by men residing in Contai town and the description of it is something which does not bear repetition. The sight of the destitute and starving people in Calcutta, heart-rending as it is, is nothing compared to what is happening in mufassal towns and in the villages. I have myself seen innumerable specimens of human skeletons in rags, men, women and children irrespective of caste or community slowly proceeding to the door of death due to want of food. While the suffering of the poorest classes, the landless, the homeless and the penniless, has been immense, people belonging to middle class families with fixed income or with reduced income barely sufficient in ordinary times to keep their body and soul together are today undergoing a tragic process of slow and painful extinction. They have been the backbone of our social and political life. They have been doing the essential services of the nation in the truest sense of the expression and have to be saved if Bengal is to live at all. One shudders to think what the extent of death roll will be in Bengal during the next few weeks and months. Many who may be spared the cold hand of death will be devitalised in a manner which will put

them outside the role of useful citizenship. The extracts that I read out from Hunter's Rural Bengal and Macaulay's Life of Lord Clive during the last session of the Assembly depicting the scenes of ruin and havoc in Bengal in or about 1770 will correctly apply today to the surroundings of Bengali life and society in 1943 after 170 years of glorious British rule in this country. I earnestly call upon Mr. Conran-Smith, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, to pay us a kindly visit to this province and then seek to criticise men on the spot for the so-called over-dramatisation of Bengal's woeful tale. In this crisis non-official help and sympathy have come from all parts of India including offers of men, money, shelter and foodgrains. True it is that this cannot touch even the fringe of the colossal problem that awaits solution, but this nation-wide sympathy for Bengal has broken all provincial barriers and brings into prominence the reality of Indian unity and integrity. This sympathy puts courage and fortitude in the hearts of the suffering millions. It has roused public opinion and has made the Government realise its responsibility. It has focussed the attention of all India and even countries outside on Bengal's desperate situation. While I have always maintained that every section of the public, nay every individual must deem it its or his duty to do everything possible to come to the rescue of the sufferer, no matter how limited such scope may be, the main responsibility for feeding the people, for providing supplies, for creating a state of affairs which will lead to the saving of human lives must rest on the Government of the country. It is not my intention today to review in minute detail the policy hitherto pursued by Government, but, maintaining as the Opposition does that Government has failed and failed miserably, the probable causes of such failure must be dispassionately examined. Such examination is to be made not in a narrow spirit of mere fault-finding but in order to secure a change of policy in administration either by agreement or by force of public opinion. Detailed discussion on these various points will take place in the course of the consideration of the Budget.

My first charge against the Government is that this policy of procurement from within and without has been open to grave objections. The Ministry started with its reckless propaganda that there was no shortage of foodgrains in Bengal and that hoarding was primarily responsible for the misery of the people. Today the Minister stands disillusioned, and he admits that there is acute shortage of foodgrains. Meanwhile he has wasted valuable time and pursued a policy based on wrong data during the last 5 months. The food drive taken in June resulted practically in driving food out of the rural areas of Bengal. The results of the statistics are yet unpublished; in fact Government dare not publish them. We demand, Sir, that we should know the figures for each district and subdivision in order to determine which according to Government is a deficit area and which is a surplus area.

One of the gravest errors committed by the Ministry was to have permitted stockists and traders to purchase rice at any available price during and after the food drive. We want to know what stocks were purchased, where they have been removed and where they have gone.

There has been no real attempt to send adequate supplies to deficit areas. In some places stocks have been seized and sealed and even now they are lying hoarded under the orders of Government although in those very places people are actually dying of starvation. The scheme of purchase of *aus* paddy practically from all parts of the province has been a criminal blunder which has placed the rural areas in a state of utter helplessness. An amazing part of Government's policy has been to encourage purchase and removal of rice even from actually distressed areas like Burdwan and Midnapore. Only this morning a gentleman came from Kalna who reported that at least 5,000 maunds of rice were purchased from the Kalna area by Ispahanis as agents of Government during the last few days. As you know, Kalna is an area where acute distress prevails today on account of the floods and on account of the low economic condition prevailing in that area. Regarding supplies from outside Bengal the original quota allotted to this province by the Government of India was revised in July last. I do not know how many members of the party now supporting Government are aware of this fact: why did the Bengal Ministry agree to such a reduction? It is a question which the Opposition will ask; it is a question which the Ministerialist party should ask of the Ministers they are supporting. Why did the Ministry agree to the reduction of the quota originally allotted to Bengal by the Government of India? We were told in a conference that the Ministry had no option because the Government of India was adamant. I ask, why did not the Ministry resist the reduction, and when Bengal was unjustly treated why did it not resign rather than surrender?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: When and in what conference?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Suhrawardy asks, when and in what conference? The last conference in which the quota was reduced: the Hon'ble Minister himself agreed to the reduction and Sir Jawla Prasad Srivastava said that the Bengal Ministry agreed to such a reduction.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I say, No.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: The reduction had been made and the Food Member of the Government of India had said that the reduction had been made with the concurrence of the Government of Bengal.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The Food Member did not know: it was done in spite of our protests.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: The Hon'ble Minister says that the reduction was made in spite of the protests of the Bengal Ministry. Even if the latter statement is correct, Bengal wants to know why did the Bengal Ministry at all agree to such a reduction? Why did they not say, "we would resign rather than submit to any reduction of the quota which has been allotted to the province of Bengal"? (Loud noise from the Coalition Benches.)

Now, Sir, we want a clear statement as regards the stocks that have come into the province from outside. Do they fulfil the quota allotted to this province? From the Punjab Minister's statement made two days after Mr. Suhrawardy's return from Lahore and he had expressed satisfaction that everything was well at Lahore—it appears that the Bengal Government has been making a profit of 40 lakhs of rupees by selling wheat to the hungry and starving people of Bengal at a rate which is much higher than the rate at which it was purchasing in the Punjab. Why this profiteering on the part of the Bengal Government at the cost of millions of Bengal's starving and dying people?

Now, Sir, the Civil Supply Minister has abused me because I demanded an enquiry regarding the appointment of Ispahanis as sole agents of the Bengal Government. We shall discuss this matter in detail during the budget discussion. I am asking the Ministry today to lay before the House a statement giving full information on the following points:—

(1) the total payments or advances made to Ispahanis and the dates and amount of such payments;

(2) a copy of the agreement between Government and the Ispahanis;

(3) the dates on which, the places from where, the persons or agents through whom, the quantity and the prices at which purchases have been made by the Ispahanis from outside Bengal on behalf of the Bengal Government.

More than 4½ crores of rupees, not from Mr. Suhrawardy's bank account but from the public funds, have been paid to the Ispahanis and Bengal has the right to know, especially because of the political connection between the firm and the Ministry, whether every pice of this colossal sum is properly accounted for. Information has been supplied to us from unimpeachable quarters that the prices at which the Ispahanis are supposed to have sold rice to the Bengal Government are in many instances much higher than the prices prevailing in the markets from where such purchases were made. Sir, this does call for a strict investigation: it is no question of abuse and counter-abuse. I hope for the reputation of the Ministry, if any is still left, the information I have asked for will be laid on the table before the discussion on grants commences on Monday. We are asking for certain information as regards matters which certainly will come within the purview of public interest. This alone will disclose the scandalous manner in which the transaction has taken place.

Another action taken by the Ministry has been to promulgate price control of rice without arranging for supplies. Government is supposed to have taken census throughout the province, and it knows and ought to know where stocks are lying today. If today supplies have dried up, price control is utterly meaningless. Price control has its value if supplies are available. But if they have gone under-ground and if Government cannot trace them, their stock-taking was an utter farce and their incompetence is a colossal reality. Even today rice is being purchased by Government agents both at controlled rates and at higher prices. I make this statement because we have got the information from the mufassal today that rice is

being purchased at prices higher than controlled rates from areas which have been openly declared as denuded areas. Local officers admit that acute distress prevails but no foodgrains are available, and therefore no relief can be given. We have received half a dozen telegrams from different officers in different parts of the province which say that relief is urgently called for but no foodgrains are available——

Mr. A. F. STARK: Telegrams to you?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Telegrams to the Bengal Relief Committee.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The telegrams are not directed to Mr. Stark in any way!

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, reports are pouring in from all parts of Bengal disclosing a most alarming state of things following complete disappearance of rice from the market, leading to wholesale starvation. If this is not remedied immediately, the situation will go entirely out of control and the province will be thrown into irremediable misery and suffering. Wherever Government has started making purchases without undertaking simultaneous responsibility for providing supplies, if and when necessary, it has led to chaos and confusion.

Sir, it is not rice alone that has to be considered. People suffer from want of almost every essential commodity on the supply of which their very existence depends. Take for instance sugar. Now, sugar is under hundred per cent. control of Government but the prevailing market price is much higher than the control price, and why? Sugar is controlled by the Government of India at the centre. The quota which is allotted to Bengal is determined by Delhi? The quota comes to Bengal only to those licensed importers who are selected by the Government of Bengal. These licensed importers in their turn can give delivery only to licensees to whom licences are issued by the Government of Bengal. There is no other third party coming just from the market or from anywhere else who can interfere at any stage. Why has the control still failed? What is the reason? The reason, I make bold to say, is that selection of some of these provincial importers has been made on grounds other than anything to do with the interests of the people—party grounds, political grounds and so forth. The selection of the licensees also has been made on similar considerations. I am not saying that all the licensees are of that type but selection of certain persons, both amongst the big importers and also among smaller traders through whom the ordinary consumer will receive sugar, has been made in accordance with a plan which has nothing to do with the interests of the people. Now, here is price control introduced, plan executed by Government, the public has got nothing to do with it; Government has control over the source of supply and still there is black market, still there is profiteering, still sugar is not available in the market.

Now, Sir, the other day a trader produced before me an original copy of an order issued by the Government of India asking for supply of mustard oil. The controlled price of mustard oil is Rs. 37 or Rs. 38 per maund.

The Government of Bengal here of course is in good company. The Government of India asks for a supply of mustard oil at Rs. 50 per maund. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That is the price.) Is that the price fixed by the Government of Bengal? (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Yes.) Now, Mr. Suhrawardy says "yes", that is the price fixed by the Bengal Government. That will be even more interesting. Rs. 38 is the price of mustard oil per maund fixed by the Government of India and the Government of India itself—I have seen the order with my own eyes—wants to purchase mustard oil at the rate of Rs. 50 per maund. Who creates black market? Who creates profiteering? Mr. Suhrawardy says "That is right"; "that has been done" (Laughter). What is the scheme and how are the starving millions of Bengal going to be saved from the oppression of the Bengal Ministry on the one hand and of the department under the control of the Government of India on the other?

Sir, we are utterly dissatisfied with the system of distribution now operating in Bengal. Even if foodgrains do arrive, as indeed we are told they have been arriving from different parts of India during the last few weeks, we have no confidence in the ability, integrity and honesty of the present Government so as to be able to say that a fair, just and equitable distribution will take place among all sections of the people. There can be only one solution to save Bengal and that is hundred per cent. control over supply prices and distributions to be carried on by an agency enjoying hundred per cent. confidence of the people at large. (Nawabzada K. NASARULLAH: That is yourself.) That is not yourself this much I know: whether it is myself or not, it remains to be seen. This means that the traders and the public must be called upon to make sacrifice for the common good of all and they must have implicit faith in the Government of the day. Corruption and jobbery must be ruthlessly suppressed, whether among officials, traders or the public. Mere threats of punitive acts will be useless if the machinery of governmental administration itself which it is supposed to detect and crush corruption leaves the backdoor open for the encouragement of the social vices which it says it is out to crush. Without the fullest co-operation among all the units, it is impossible to save the chaotic situation into which the province has been thrown. The unplanned and ill-executed administration of the Government has been indeed of a shocking character. Let me say with a full sense of responsibility that the activities of the Government seem to suggest that whatever foodgrains may be available will be kept in greater Calcutta area and the rest of the province will be left to its own tragic fate. The utter callousness of Government in respect of equitable distribution will be evident from the fact that though acute distress prevails in the mufassal, rice is still being purchased from those areas irrespective of local needs. Hoarded stocks are still lying there although people in the very locality are dying for want of food. Unless public opinion in Bengal is roused we shall find ourselves caught in a deep-rooted conspiracy to starve millions of Bengal's rural population.

It is indeed amazing that Government has bungled throughout. I am at a loss to understand what the policy of the Government is. Does

Mr. Amery still hold the view that the people of Bengal are suffering because of over-feeding or of deliberate hoarding, specially by greedy agriculturists? Why are foodgrains not being rushed to Bengal from Australia and other parts of the world outside India?

There has been no planning for increasing the production of foodgrains within the province, and if the present deplorable policy of drift continues regarding the handling of the *aman* paddy, Bengal will be doomed beyond remedy. Even if a mere fraction of the people who have actually died of hunger and disease in Bengal had met the same fate in the streets of London, Oxford and Edinburgh the people of England would have risen to a man and the Government of the country would have been thrown out of office. Here news is gagged, motives are imputed, jail gates are thrown wide open if Governmental incompetence is disclosed and criticised. Again, we are accustomed to transfer much of our miseries to the vagaries of Fate. I have been attacked by men far and near as I have been supposed to make food a matter of political controversy. Some of the critics, members of the Government party and the European party, themselves combined only six months ago to throw out the previous Ministry as it failed to solve the food problem. At that time they claimed to act in public interest and for the good of the community as a whole.

We ask, Sir, for no charity. Indeed, the gravest problem before us today is how Bengal can be saved from being turned into a province of beggars. People have to be fed and saved immediately no doubt. But no Government worth its salt can allow a day to be wasted for discovering the means of re-stabilising Bengal's economic life and discovering means of saving generations of our people from ruin and disaster. Let us make our position abundantly clear. We do not want food to be made the plaything of politics, but while we shall do everything possible to give and secure relief according to our means we have got to criticise Government and its policy if we consider that such policy is responsible for the dangerous situation that exists today. After all it is our political bondage that is responsible for our economic ruin. It is not nature's hand alone that has given or is giving Bengal a death-blow. Political mal-administration lies at the root of the present economic catastrophe and no lasting solution can come until India is economically and politically free. If there had been a truly National Government enjoying full power (Cries of "Ah, 'Ah" from the European Benches.)—there cannot be any National Government so long as you people are here. I am not talking of the National Government under the Constitution Act of 1935. (The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: You were supposed to be there for 16 months.) And I learnt a lesson which I shall never forget in my life.

Now, Sir, if there had been a truly National and responsible Government enjoying full power at the head of the country and also of the province instead of it being ruled by the iron hand of oppressors and exploiters, the food problem of Bengal and India would have been solved without much difficulty. But we do not want to raise the bigger issues just now. We do not want to raise any controversy relating to party politics just now merely for the fun of it. If a party Government is in power today, it is not our

fault. If parts of the bureaucratic machinery and some of the real representatives of British rulers are soaked in partisanship callous to the needs of the common people, it is not our fault. We assert without fear of contradiction that Government has forfeited its right to rule over the province because of its failure to control the food situation in this province. How can Government complain, I ask, that the Opposition has merely criticised when the fact remains that our constructive advice at every step has been flouted until we have reached a stage when Government finds itself caught in its intricate net of its own misguided policy and acts? As regards the future, the Opposition offers in a genuine spirit of good will and service its hand of fullest co-operation. Let the policy of Government be determined and carried out in a manner which will be acceptable to all parties and sections, and we shall be prepared to do everything possible to save the situation. On the other hand, if Government chooses to carry on its present policy of exclusiveness and decides on its schemes and measures on its own responsibility, we shall, as now, co-operate when we consider such co-operation is justified and we shall ruthlessly oppose when we consider such opposition to be paramount. The supreme need of the hour is unity and oneness of mind. We are prepared to keep all controversies in the background and work jointly for mobilising both men and resources of the province in a true spirit of comradeship, provided the proper atmosphere is created by those who are in power today and the real masters and rulers of the country demonstrate by their deeds and not by their words that for the time being at any rate the interests of Government and the people have merged together in saving this great province, whose contribution to the building up of the national life of India will ever remain a proud record in the history of India's struggle for freedom. (Loud applause from the Opposition benches.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that—

(*i*) the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge, Civil Supplies, in the Assembly on the 15th instant is extremely disappointing and unsatisfactory, particularly in so far as it does not indicate Government's immediate intention as yet to undertake the maintenance of food supply for the entire population, specially the rural population and the middle classes, during the emergency, and in so far as it shows the absence of any comprehensive scheme for the equitable distribution of all available stock of foodgrains, from within or from without the province, with the introduction of necessary rationing schemes for urban areas;

(*ii*) immediate steps should be taken to isolate the big consuming areas like Calcutta and Howrah with their industrial suburbs, Chittagong, Dacca, Narayanganj, all places of military concentration and aerodrome construction and big evacuees' camps, from the rest of Bengal, with a view to maintain the supplies in such areas with the imports from outside and to retain the supplies in rural Bengal for local consumption as far as practicable, supplementing the same with surpluses of the foodgrains from outside Bengal to relieve specially deficit areas;

(*iii*) immediate steps should be taken to prevent the purchase of *aus* paddy and rice as also the coming *aman* crop by big traders from outside, whether Government agents or others, at competitive prices, and to prohibit the export of such foodgrains to the bigger consuming centres isolated as above;

(*iv*) immediate steps should be taken to reorganise the Village Food Committees set up during the Food Drive and to organise Union and Village Relief Committees with adequate representation of all progressive parties and organisations and to give effect to a comprehensive scheme of relief for all classes determined in consultation with the leaders of public opinion.

Sir, my resolution has got four parts. In the first part I have sought to express our dissatisfaction at the speech delivered by the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge. I believe it will be universally agreed and I believe the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge also feels in his heart of hearts that the things he has been able so far to do have not as yet brought the solution nearer, and in the circumstances if anybody maintains that the statement made by him is unsatisfactory and disappointing I suppose that he and the members of his party would not consider that to be a crime. On a previous occasion, Sir, on the 12th July, 1943, in this very House I had given a detailed account of the very many measures of bungling that Government had committed and, Sir, thereafter I had taken occasions to discuss both in public meetings and in conferences with leaders in what respects the present Government have failed to discharge their duties to the people in this respect. I shall not go into those details at the present stage more because of the grim circumstances through which we are passing than for anything else. I have no heart to throw mud at each other and, Sir, I would rather confine myself to certain specific and definite suggestions for remedying the situation and I would leave the suggestions to the consideration of the Hon'ble Minister and his department.

Sir, we, on this side of the House, from the very beginning of the deterioration of the food situation, have pleaded for one thing, namely, that the approach to this question must be a national approach. We had tried even when there was the previous Ministry in power—we had pleaded with them as well as with this Ministry—that let there not be any attempt to approach this all-pervasive question from a party point of view. We have failed so far in our attempts and we do not propose to repeat that suggestion any more.

Sir, we propose now that an immediate attempt should be made here and now to isolate the big consuming centres like Calcutta, Howrah and the suburbs. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: The suburbs get nothing.) The suburbs get something because there are mills and factories and not because of the civil population, and my friend Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri must admit that, but in any case those living in Calcutta, the civil population, do not get anything except through a few controlled shops and cheap grain shops. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: There are no cheap grain shops in the

suburbs.) That is true. I suggest that instead of having mutual recriminations at this stage let us try another possibility. If as is often stated we are having large quantities of foodgrains from outside the province, if it is a fact that the Government of India and other provinces in India have risen to the occasion to help Bengal out of her difficulty, if it is also a fact as is often stated in statements made by members belonging to the Government, let us then try to conserve all that food from outside for the big consuming centres. Leave Bengal, the rural part of Bengal, to itself. Let not any attempt be made to buy foodgrains from those areas for Calcutta or other big consuming centres or big consuming zones which have also been set up in rural areas of Bengal either for military concentrations or for giving relief to evacuees and the like. It may then be discovered that with some little adjustment here and there the local people may get some source from which local needs might be met, at least for the time being and, Sir, I do not stop there. My suggestion is that in addition to this local adjustment wherever you find acute distress, because either of shortage of local crop or because of flood and other natural calamities, send surplus stocks from outside Bengal to relieve the distress in such areas. Sir, I have envisaged isolation of big consuming centres coupled with rationing in those areas. I have applied some thought to this question of rationing. It is surprising that in spite of the fact that about the end of March, schemes were prepared for the introduction of rationing in some of the big areas like Calcutta and Howrah, nothing has been done as yet. We are even now having promises that from October or November we will have rationing. I am not quite sure if that would be possible either because in the budget presented to this House a few days ago we have a mention of rationing possibility but no amount has been provided there. It is only stated that as the scheme is not ready, it is not possible to ascertain the total commitments for rationing schemes and the amount will have to be passed through a Supplementary Budget Grant. When will this rationing come? Will it be after *aman* crop is available and Government finds itself in a position to practically dispense with any necessity for rationing? The more rigorous shortage there is, the greater is the urgency for rationing and, Sir, if there is really a shortage as is evidenced everywhere, I fail to understand why the Government is shilly-shallying with the scheme which was prepared as early as March-April, 1943.

In the third part of my resolution, I suggest that there should be a complete stoppage of the purchase of *aus* paddy from the mufassal by Government Agents or through the big purchasers from outside who are non-Government Agents and there should be a stoppage of movement of such grains that are still there to big consuming centres like Calcutta, Howrah, Chittagong and other concentrations, military and otherwise.

In the fourth part of my resolution, I have pleaded for a reorganisation of food committees and for the organisation of union and village relief committees. These two ideas are not new. I am free to admit that these two ideas have already been circulated by the machinery of the Government

to its officers and yet, Sir, it has been our experience that in the rural areas the food committees that were set up in some of the villages in a hurry have mostly been unrepresentative and practically hopeless in their constitution. The Hon'ble Minister in charge assured us on a previous occasion that he would issue orders to get all food committees properly reconstituted so that the committees might function as real Pallimangal Samities as originally thought of. Where are those orders? Where is the attempt to reorganise the committees? Where is the facility provided for non-official public opinion to be associated with such a big undertaking of relief and distribution of food in a calamitous situation like this. We have had on the 18th August a circular issued over the signature of the Hon'ble Minister in charge addressed to various local officials calling upon them to establish relief committees. Along with that on the 20th August another circular was issued to give an idea of the kind of committees desired and the nature of duties of such committees. Sir, we would like to know what progress has been made in respect to these union and village committees. I have had information from several districts. These informations all go to show that although these circulars have been sent, few district officials and very few subdivisional officers have so far applied themselves to the organisation of union and village relief committees. There have been some formed probably where some luminaries of the Muslim League Party or of the Government Party are shining, and probably these have been organised with their assistance and with the assistance of their henchmen but, Sir, wherever, we find, the people have not been directly associated with the party that is in power, people are allowed to die unheard and unsung and committees for relief are still to be organised.

I have had a letter only the other day from a part of Birbhum, from Hetampur, which is supposed to be a good rice-growing area of Bengal, inviting attention to the acute distress prevailing there. I had personally seen one of the Additional Deputy Secretaries of the Government with that letter and asked him to write to the District Magistrate of Birbhum to find out if the distress complained of is there and to organise a local relief committee. I got another letter from a lady of that place who is anxious that something should be done and I brought a copy of that letter also with me. She says that it is now 15 days and yet neither the District Magistrate has been there nor the Subdivisional Officer and nothing has been done so far.

Sir, this is not an isolated instance. I know, Sir, that in the Kandi subdivision of the district of Murshidabad a terrible distress is prevailing. Local people have organised several relief committees. The local officials have also associated themselves with one of those committees and when they were approached to organise along the lines of the new circular, they said "We are not yet aware if the supply to be had on this basis could be organised" and they expressed their helplessness in this regard. Such reports are coming from different parts. I want to inform this House through you, Sir, that mere idle talk and assurances, printed circulars and notices, newspaper communiqués and press statements do not bring in food.

There must be the machinery created and sooner the machinery is created, the better. One more day means several hundreds of lives are lost. In the streets of Calcutta, we see grim scenes everyday. Yesterday, my esteemed friend Mr. Dhirendra Nath Sen was ringing me up at about half past eight in the evening and he brought to my notice that when he was coming by Park Street, he saw one dead body lying on the pavement. When I went home I found several little children on the Rash Behary Avenue pavement at the point of death. The A.R.P. boys got them removed. Such things are happening in this city of Calcutta.

This morning's newspaper report (17th September, 1943,) shows that there were nearly 59 deaths yesterday and I do not know what would be the total number of deaths during the last few weeks in the city of Calcutta itself. Similar things must be happening in various parts of Bengal. Reports do not all reach the newspapers and reports do not all come to us. I appeal, Sir, that when such a situation has faced us all, let us put our heads together and let us find out a solution by all means possible and if a solution is devised with the co-operation of the leaders of public opinion, we, on this side of the House, assure our full co-operation provided it is really meant to further relief measures with the co-operation of everybody.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that the provincial Government has bungled the food situation on the following among other grounds:—

(*i*) by not making equitable distribution of the foodstuffs imported into and purchased within Bengal;

(*ii*) by allowing removal of train loads of rice from Bengal during the month of August last;

(*iii*) by appointing agents to purchase *aus* paddy in several districts of the province;

(*iv*) by not giving due effect to the policy of price-control;

(*v*) by allowing the traders to withhold the sale of rice in their stock at controlled prices; and

(*vi*) by not checking bribery, corruption and nepotism in the matter of food supply.

Sir, my resolution speaks for itself. I dare say that there is no member in this House who will contradict me when I say that what I have stated in my resolution are the most genuine grievances of the public of Bengal.

Sir, my first charge against the Government is that they are not making equitable distribution of foodstuffs imported into Bengal from outside the province and also of the foodstuff that was purchased within the province. Had there been an equitable distribution, how is it that reports are pouring in from almost every district that there is no rice? From Press reports we found the other day that there was no rice in the markets at Comilla and rice in small quantities was selling there at Rs. 60 per maund. Sir, Comilla is the headquarter town of a district: how is it that a district town should run short of rice when the Hon'ble Minister says that rice has been pouring in in large quantities from other provinces? That shows that there is no

equitable distribution of rice. Then, again, there is shortage of rice in Madaripur. Madaripur being the subdivisional headquarters of Faridpur, how is it that it is running short of rice? The reason for that, I am constrained to say, is that rice under Government control is not being properly distributed. Rice accumulates in Government storage but it vanishes in a mysterious manner. There is some leakage somewhere, and that leakage must be found out. That is the public grievance against this Government and that has been strengthened by the fact that the Government have not taken the public into their confidence on the question as to where the rice which is imported into Bengal goes. The other day I saw a newspaper report that the Governments of the provinces sending foodstuffs to Bengal also were complaining that rice and wheat were being imported into Bengal in abundance but they did not know where it went or how it was being distributed. That is a most legitimate grievance. We are entitled to know from the Hon'ble Minister today in his reply as to how he has distributed the rice which he got from other provinces and purchased in Bengal. If the Hon'ble Minister wants to enjoy the confidence of the public, then my suggestion is that they should issue a bulletin every week showing how the distribution is made of the foodgrains which he brings in from outside Bengal and purchases within. My second charge is that the Government is allowing removal of rice by trains outside Bengal. We must know whether the rice which comes into Bengal is going out of Bengal through the back door. A few days back I got reports which I immediately communicated to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies that train loads of rice were being sent out from the Chitpore Railway yard to places outside Bengal,—I understand, to Cochin through the eastern border. I am quite sure that my information about such exports of rice from Bengal is absolutely correct. I challenge the Hon'ble Minister to contradict me. In any case, he must give an account of the rice which is purchased in the province and which is being brought from outside. Then, Sir, my third charge is that Government have done more harm than good by appointing agents to purchase the *aus* paddy in several districts, particularly the deficit districts. Sir, my district of Faridpur is a deficit district, being a jute growing district. Notwithstanding, Government have appointed agents to purchase *aus* paddy in that district. My friend, Maulvi Ahmed Ali Mridha, a representative of Faridpur, had been complaining since February last that the district of Faridpur was short of foodgrains. He now belongs to the Government party and it is surprising to know that the firm of Ispahanis could be appointed agents of Government to purchase rice and paddy in Faridpur. Similar is the case with Mymensingh which is mainly a jute-growing district. Still Mymensingh has been found out to be a place where rice should be purchased by agents of Government. Does this House support purchases and removal of paddy and rice from deficit districts at this critical time?

Now, Sir, as regards price control, I claim to be the first member of this House who advocated that Government should adopt the policy of price control right from the beginning of the last paddy season. When this House met in February last I pleaded most seriously for taking immediate

steps for controlling the price of rice and paddy. Sir, unfortunately for Bengal, that was not to be. When the last Government ceased to function, the price of rice was not more than Rs. 20. This Government started with a price of Rs. 24 in April last. Since their assumption of office I appealed to them also for fixing the price of paddy and rice. Still the Government had not moved. At last, however, Government moved in the matter only last month. I do not know whether the people of Bengal have blessed this Government for adopting this measure at so late an hour and at a time when rice has been scarce. When people have been dying by thousands Government have come forward to bring down the price which even today is not within the reach of the poorer section of the people. And yet due effect has not been given to price-control. The traders are merrily carrying on their profiteering trade by bribing the supply department and the police. Government is not taking adequate steps to check them. I ask, Sir, why of all the provinces of India Bengal has been suffering so much for want of food? Is it a fact that Bengal could not produce sufficient food last year for her consumption even for nine months? I understood that the deficit was at the most between 10 and 15 per cent. of the normal requirements. If that was so, how then could it happen that Bengal has been suffering miseries for want of food only after three months of the last harvesting season? There is something rotten somewhere in the machinery of this Government which is responsible for our distress. At the last harvesting time there was no apprehension that Bengal would be in a terrible grip of famine this year. We were always told by Government that the deficit was negligible, and that the shortage was due to hoarding of foodstuffs. But it is now a proved fact that Bengal has not only not got sufficient hoarded rice anywhere but Bengal has got to be fed by other provinces. Was it the case with Bengal year before last? Year before last also Government purchased paddy and rice but Bengal did not suffer then as she has now been suffering. During the last year Bengal was not required to be fed by other provinces. How, I ask again, how could it happen that of all provinces Bengal has been selected to be the most suffering province? Is it ordained by God or is it due to the cruel handling of an unsympathetic administration? I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies to say what it is. I would again ask the Hon'ble Minister whether the present Government has any power to prevent export of rice from Bengal even today. The previous Ministry had no such power. Not only that, the previous Ministry did not get co-operation even from the head of this province. I understand that the present Ministry has got the confidence of the head of the province, but have they got the power to prevent export of rice from Bengal? I am afraid they have none. In these circumstances I pray in all earnestness to prevent export of rice from Bengal. I have already informed the House that several thousand maunds of rice have been recently exported from the Chitpore station to some places outside Bengal presumably to be exported somewhere as desired by the military authorities. So, Sir, so long as rice will be exported from Bengal, other provinces will be pouring rice like water into a leaky jar in Bengal. That leakage must be stopped.

Sir, I do not want to quarrel with the Hon'ble Minister. I have offered him my hand of co-operation. I have been trying to co-operate with the Government since last December. I do not hope that so long as the war will continue the food situation will or can come to the normal state. Let us, however, think of what can be done with regard to the future crop. What I want the present Ministry to do is that for the next *aman* crop let there be stock-taking at the time of harvesting. The Hon'ble Minister should not adopt the policy of stock-taking of rice and paddy in the month of July or August or September as has been done this time. If he has courage, let him take stocks right from the time of harvesting of the next *aman* crop and control its price. Then as regards distribution let it be left to licensed trade. He should not appoint a few selected agents to purchase rice and to control the entire supply of rice. If he does so, he should think thrice before doing it because in that case he will have to take the entire responsibility for distributing rice to every nook and corner of this province. He should know that the rural people are supplied by ordinary trade with paddy and rice in the rural markets. If he intends to take the responsibility for supplying paddy and rice in the rural markets he should make a list of traders who trade in local hats and bazars right from now and let these traders be given licence. If trade conditions are violated, not only the trade licence shall be cancelled, but the licensee must be punished with heavy fine and imprisonment. Let as many licences as possible be issued to *bona fide* traders to supply paddy and rice at every nook and corner of the province and let an honest and efficient machinery be set up to check and control their activities. If Government can prevent export of rice and paddy from Bengal, then I think after the next *aman* crop is harvested, Bengal may get some relief. This is what is needed for the future. For what the Government have done up to date they stand condemned.

With these words I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that this Assembly is of——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You need not move it. That has already been moved by Dr. Mookerjee. You can speak on it.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Yes, Sir. It is the same. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had no mind to disturb this House after the speeches that have been already delivered on that particular motion but for the persistent efforts made by the present Government to justify themselves even at this stage in this grave food crisis that confronts the province. Sir, I am amazed to find that Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy even now justifies Government which has been responsible directly or indirectly for bringing about a desperate situation in the country which is beyond control at the present moment.

Sir, it deepens the gloom in the minds of the sincerest well-wishers and friends of this country that day in and day out we should witness in the streets of Calcutta and the mufassal areas scenes of miseries and deaths due to starvation. No civilized Government, no civilized administration in the

world can stand up and say that owing to causes, owing to predisposing conditions, owing to forces and circumstances beyond control that this situation has been brought about.

Sir, hungry mothers from the mufassal areas with suckling babes in their bosom, famished fathers with starving children in their arms are streaming into this city of Calcutta in search of a few morsels. We have seen in the streets of Calcutta people—men, women and children—picking up bones, remnants of foodstuffs from dustbins. Our mothers and sisters today appear in tattered clothes, clothes hardly sufficient to cover their shame; their sense and sensibility must have been deadened by the magnitude of the calamity that confronts the province at the present moment. Even at this stage does the Hon'ble Minister for Food Supplies come forward with specious promises, false and misleading assurances that everything will be O.K. in course of a few months. We have had enough of assurances, we have had enough of promises in the past. Does he not remember them? Sir, perhaps this distress in his calmer moments might have also toned and sobered down his temperament slightly; deep distress might have humanised his soul slightly. Sir, I did not mark in his speech the other day that flippancy, that note of arrogance and insolence with which he treated the Opposition and members of the public in the past as also millions of people that knock about today in search of food. Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy gave a catalogue of the reasons which have brought about this desperate situation—failure of *aus* crop in 1942, failure of *aman* crop in 1943, evacuation, refugees, influx of industrial population and all that, as if these reasons were not there and did not obtain during the regime of the previous Government. Yet Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy was most emphatic, most pronounced in condemning the old Government in no uncertain terms. For what reason? Perhaps his memories are much shorter than those of members on this side, otherwise he would have remembered that his insistence in season and out of season that there was no shortage of foodstuffs in the country has been responsible for this desperate situation today. If he can refresh his memory—I would refer him to his speech presently—he will find from his own statement issued from the Civil Supplies Department that it was categorically stated that there should be no panic whatsoever since there was no ultimate shortage of foodgrains. Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy now comes forward and says that owing to such and such causes, owing to such and such reasons, there has been this crisis. When Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy assumed office—for whatever reasons I do not know—he held out the assurance that the last Ministry had bungled from beginning to end; but as soon as this Ministry took charge of the administration, they would be able to set right all the irregularities and all the defects that occurred in the last administration. I will refer him to his own statement. Mr. Suhrawardy will kindly refresh his memory now.

Yes, this Ministry has contributed something new. We never heard of deaths from starvation during the regime of the old Government. We have something new today—something new, something striking, something remarkable, something melancholy, something regrettable which cannot but strike the deepest chord of the human mind all over India at the present

moment. It may not create any impression on the stony heart of a heartless Government which dances to the tune of the bureaucracy. It may be possible that it will not create any impression upon their mind, and upon the supporters of the present Ministry. But when we come across the streets of Calcutta tragic scenes of miseries and far away in the distant mufassal we see unfortunate children of the soil slowly facing death raising a piteous wail and lamentation that spreads sombre gloom all round we cannot but be deeply touched. Sir, I would refer to Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy's statement at once. On the 4th May, 1943, in a press-note issued by the Civil Supplies Department it was stated amongst other things: "The Hon'ble Minister of Civil Supplies is of opinion that the prices now prevailing are purely speculative, and bear no relation whatever to the true stock position. The Hon'ble Minister is convinced that any deficit this year can be fully met from carry-over from 1941-42 crop. The public may now rest assured that there is no cause for ultimate shortage of foodgrains." On May 13, 1943, speaking at a Press Conference, Mr. Suhrawardy himself refuted the prevalent idea that exports and the denial policy of the last year were responsible for the situation and added that "these factors played not a very important part in relation to the stock position, as it really was." On May 17, speaking at a public meeting, the Hon'ble Minister observed: "The worst feature of the last Ministry's food policy was their insistence on shortage and encouragement given to hoarders and black marketeers. There is no need for panic. Exports are nil and imports from the Government of India are considerable. Army requirements account for a very small amount of rice. The number of evacuees is not such as can cause any dislocation." Today Mr. Suhrawardy catalogues the reasons which have brought about the desperate situation. Failure of *aus* crop in 1942, failure of *aman* crop in 1942-43, the havoc caused by cyclone in Midnapore and 24-Parganas, destruction of paddy by pest, the boat denial policy, evacuation, refugees from Burma, influx of industrial labour and loss of import from Burma. There is nothing new or original in the reasons adduced, except that there is glaring discrepancy between his previous statements and the present one. These very reasons were there, yet Mr. Suhrawardy condemned the old Government in the strongest possible terms in having failed to relieve the food crisis. I am not holding any brief for the old Government. I most emphatically declared when I discussed the food situation in March last that I was not prepared to stand any bungling, any swindling and any dishonest collusion or conspiracy with vested interests and today I repeat that statement with all the emphasis that I can command that I am not prepared to stand any bungling, any dishonest conspiracy and collusion with vested interests to rob Bengal of its manhood, to rob the people of Bengal of their foodstuffs. It must be said to the credit of the last Ministry that they never hoodwinked, nor did they mislead the public into thinking that there was no shortage of foodstuffs in the province, especially when shortage was actually there and it must be said further to their credit that they made the Government of India agree to their contention that there was actual shortage of foodstuffs in the entire province. The Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy and some of those gentlemen who have been recently installed into office criticised the

old Government for bringing about a desperate food situation in the country, but since their assumption of office, the situation has worsened beyond description. It is contended in responsible quarters that owing to deliberate bungling and inefficient handling of the food situation and most reckless indifference of the present Government to the sufferings of the people that the situation has gone beyond control. It is not for nothing therefore that a Food Commissioner has suddenly been appointed to exercise control and supervision over the food situation in the province in these critical times. We do not yet know the relations that subsist between the present Minister in charge of Food Supplies and the Food Commissioner recently appointed but it gives us a sense of relief to discover that under the regime of the new Governor, a healthy tone has been sought to be introduced into the administration of Bengal, which has hitherto suffered not merely from a lack of clear perspective, lucidity of thought, soundness of reasoning, but even from lack of any definite policy conducive to the welfare of the province. It could not be imagined for a single moment that an intelligent man like Mr. Suhrawardy is not alive to all that has been happening in the province. During the last 40 years, the average yield of rice in Bengal has been 24 crores and 94 lakhs of maunds. Annual requirement for direct consumption today is 29 crores maunds; daily requirement of rice being in the neighbourhood of 77 lakh maunds. Thus Bengal has always been a deficit province. But actual quantity cut off on account of loss of Burma has only been 2 lakh tons a year. That only represents a small fraction of the total consumption in the entire province. If the policy of the Government had not been defective, if the Government had effective and proper control over supply, distribution and prices, the situation would have been brought under control long ago. Mr. Suhrawardy in his previous statement definitely stated that export was almost nil. But according to a press note, shipments of rice for South Africa alone during the first seven months of 1943 amounted to 20,000 maunds and further consignment of 56,000 maunds of rice for the Persian Gulf was exported from Calcutta a few months ago. The extent of industrial requirement comes up to 2,68,000 maunds per month. If Mr. Suhrawardy's statement is correct that nothing was exported from inside the province and that there was a constant flow of commodities from outside the province, how does he account for this desperate situation in the country? Many causes have combined to bring about the present food situation in Bengal. The denial policy pursued by the Government despite emphatic protests from the Huq Ministry and the heavy military purchases are responsible to a large measure in creating almost famine conditions in the province. Export of foodstuffs is yet another factor which has aggravated the situation. As I have stated above, export from Calcutta alone would come up to 76,000 maunds of rice during the last seven months. These figures given by the Government, together with the figures for export last year and the previous year show an enormous quantity of essential foodgrains continuously exported to foreign countries. A culminating point was however reached when the present Ministry gave the sole right to purchase rice from the districts on their own behalf to Messrs. M. M. Ispahani & Co. The firm was ordered, I am told, to buy surplus stock of rice lying in the districts, but they bought

the entire stock of rice that was available. There was something fishy, something suspicious in the policy pursued by the Government. No tenders were called, no terms were offered to others. None of the Chambers were consulted. I am further told that Ispahanis demanded that they should be given the permission to purchase on their own account, so long as they served as Government Agents, with the approval of the Civil Supplies Department. The policy pursued by the Government has been defective in the extreme. Government lacks any comprehensive plan to meet the rapidly deteriorating situation. The policy of the Government to allow private traders to buy on their own account, as also on behalf of the Government, has naturally led to grave abuses and corruption in the market. It is suspected that the trader can, under such circumstances, buy on his own account without any restriction whatsoever and manipulate the market in his favour and convert the surplus area into a deficit area. Then again, the policy with regard to anti-hoard drive has not at all been inspired with a lofty motive. The Government excluded at first hoarders and middle men of Calcutta and Howrah and directed its attention to the small consumers in the countryside. At the insistence, however, of the Opposition during the last Assembly Session, Calcutta and Howrah were also brought under the operation of the anti-hoarding campaign. But meanwhile, agents of buyers in Calcutta and Howrah, which had been singled out in the beginning for preferential treatment, could not be prevented from buying stocks from the surplus areas at exorbitant prices and forcing them underground. Then again, by the time, Government's attention was roused, and directed towards Calcutta and Howrah, stocks which were sought to be liquefied must either have been forced underground or exported out of the country. Enough time and opportunities were given to them to complete their desired programme of action. Mr. Speaker, people expected that after the introduction of free trade in Eastern Zone, the food situation must improve with the flow of commodities from outside the province, but lack of vision and proper perspective of the Bengal Government lost to Bengal a golden opportunity of securing foodstuffs for the unfortunate people of the province in her greatest crisis. The Bengal Government should have carried on negotiations direct with Orissa, Bihar and Assam Governments and these provinces could only sell to the Bengal Government and the probable danger of profiteers and middlemen coming into the field and bidding up prices could have been prevented once for all. Thanks to the indiscretion and inefficient handling of the situation by the Bengal Government prices in Bihar and Orissa shot up beyond calculation immediately after the introduction of free trade and they were faced with the same unfortunate conditions obtaining in our province. As everybody is aware, Mr. Suhrawardy waged an anti-hoard drive throughout the province. We have not yet had results of this drive and the actual stock position in the country. Possibly the results do not justify the expectations that were based on absolutely flimsy grounds. On the contrary, it has sucked the countryside through and through and brought about a desperate situation in the mufassil areas. Day in and day out we are having reports from Mymensingh, Noakhali, Chandpur, Chittagong, Dacca, Murshidabad, Burdwan and Bankura that people are faced with an

unprecedented calamity which never confronted Bengal within living memory. Mr. Suhrawardy is very eloquent when he criticises the old Government and tries to fasten the responsibility on the Opposition today when he alleges that, owing to our propaganda that price control without supply is not a feasible proposition, there is no rice in the market. It is a barefaced mendacity and shameless hyprocricy that tries to cloak this Government's deliberate sins of omission and commission. Will this Government have the courage to face the catalogue of charges against them?

What about thousand tons of foodstuffs pouring in every day from outside the Province? Are they going to the "bottomless pit"? What about Sirdar Baldev Singh's startling disclosures? He quoted facts and figures to substantiate that since 15th August, the Punjab had despatched 50,000 tons of wheat and wheat products to Bengal. The Government of Bengal, on that account alone, as alleged by Sirdar Baldev Singh, has made a profit in the neighbourhood of 20 lakhs. What has the Government got to say on this? In respect of *atta* and *maida*, the Bengal Government, he contends, is purchasing from the mills of the Punjab at the rate of Rs. 11-8 per maund inclusive of freight charges to Calcutta and selling it at Rs. 17-8 per maund leaving a clear profit of Rs. 5 per maund.

Is it a fact that some time towards March last, 4 different parties had been given Rs. 16 lakhs each for purchasing rice from surplus areas in certain districts? Who were these parties? Did they purchase only the surplus rice or buy the entire stock of the districts? What was the purchasing price paid to the cultivators and at what price did they sell to Government? Is it a fact that this formed the subject matter of an official complaint and the Government of India as a result of this complaint, deputed the Hon'ble Mr. Somerset Butler to make an enquiry? Did he submit his report regarding the results of the enquiry? Will the Government of Bengal have the courage, the candour and the sincerity to disclose the salient points in the report? May we further ask whether any rice was sold to the Bengal agents of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation and, if so, what is the quantity? Why has the Muslim League Ministry given the sole purchasing contract to one Muslim merchant closely connected with the Ministry? What is the amount of money so far paid to him? At what price did he purchase the foodgrains from the cultivators and at what price did he sell them to Government? Does the Government realise that the purchase of entire stock of rice has resulted in the situation with which we in Bengal are faced today? Sir Muhammad Azizul Haque from New Delhi fastened the responsibility on Mr. Fazlul Huq, and Mr. Fazlul Huq had the courage to emphatically repudiate the baseless charges against him and his Government—a Government that had emphatically protested against the denial policy which was responsible for the beginning of the troubles. It is contended in many responsible circles that heavy army purchases, large exports from Bengal and restriction of movement of foodgrains under the denial scheme have brought about the desperate state of things. The Government of India emphatically repudiate it. The Government of India have asked the Provincial Governments to pool their resources and distribute their surplus foodstuffs to Bengal in their hour of distress. But the States and

other provinces with one voice declare that all they are sending are going to the "bottomless pit". Who is responsible? Who is responsible if it is neither the Government of India nor the Government of Bengal nor the Government of Great Britain? Sir, I sent a cablegram to Mr. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, and Mr. Winston Churchill on behalf of the city of Calcutta and the Province of Bengal. President Roosevelt had the courtesy to send a reply stating that he was trying his level best to facilitate the efforts of British Indian officials in alleviating the situation in every possible way; but Mr. Winston Churchill, the head of the British Empire, in this hour of Bengal's great crisis when millions of people are dying of starvation and when Bengal is faced with the most serious crisis in her history, has not even a word of sympathy for the unfortunate sufferers in this country. If the Government are not responsible, then are we the members of the Opposition responsible? These Ministers by their constant shirking of responsibilities have conclusively proved that they cannot cope with the magnitude of the task and they stand condemned before the bar of public opinion for their indiscreet and injudicious handling of the food situation. Railways, Port Trust and other large employers of labour according to Sir Jagadish Prosad are arranging supplies for their own men on the basis laid down; even the Government of India are providing foodstuffs for 16 to 20 millions of people. Cannot the Government of Bengal who have taken upon themselves in a hole and corner fashion the responsibility of administering the province take charge of the primary responsibility of feeding the poor, clothing the naked and relieving the distress of destitute sufferers of the province? In the name of humanity and in the name of starving millions can the Government of Bengal with any candour, with any sincerity and honesty of purpose say that they are discharging their responsibility to the satisfaction of the people of Bengal at the present moment. The present Government by their deliberate mishandling of the situation, by their insistence on shortage of foodstuffs, by their cruel indifference to the sufferings of the people, have mismanaged and bungled the whole situation very badly. This Government which was pitch-forked into this responsible position by resort to the worst constitutional impropriety, must disappear like a dream very soon. Mightier Governments with brilliant records of service have also disappeared like a dream and crumbled to pieces like the baseless fabric of a vision. This Government is also bound to go down, but it has to be seen whether it will go down with the curses of the people on its head, or the blessings of heaven above. The groans of the dead and dying might not penetrate the hearts of these hard hearted bureaucrats entrenched in office with a comfortable majority behind them but sooner or later, it is bound to produce the deepest impression upon the minds of those honourable members opposite who are swayed by no personal consideration, but by a desire to serve the people at the greatest crisis of the Bengali race.

One word more and I have done:

Whoever kills a soul kills all humanity, whoever saves a soul saves all humanity.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a matter which is very serious, but it is very painful to speak on this subject.

This subject has been discussed and should be discussed in the true spirit of realities of the situation, but I find that there is laughing, jumping and other things. So, it is very painful to speak on the subject. Sir, it is better to analyse the facts since this Ministry has assumed office on the 24th April, 1943. I want to analyse them not in the spirit of fault-finding but in a spirit that if these facts are analysed in the true spirit it may be found that something wrong must be there, and that is why the steps taken by the Ministry since its assumption of office were ineffective. The Ministry came into office on the 24th April, 1943. At that time certainly the price of rice was Rs. 18 to 20 for fine rice and Rs. 16 or 17 for medium rice. After the Ministry had taken office the price of rice was rising up. Then the next step that the Ministry did take was anti-hoard drive, as they call it, instead of a food census. It was taken between the 7th and the 20th of June this year in the mufassal areas. This drive cost Government Rs. 12 lakhs—a huge amount indeed. We find that a lump provision of Rs. 12 lakhs has been made in the budget for expenditure in connection with anti-hoarding drive. After the anti-hoard drive was concluded the Hon'ble Food Minister made a statement on the 5th July, 1943, to the effect that the main purpose of the drive was to undertake an anti-hoarding campaign throughout the province of Bengal with a view to compiling a complete census of food stocks, seeds and seed requirements of land cultivation and of cattle, and also to organise food committees on territorial basis and bring about through these food committees a more equitable distribution of foodstuffs. It was also stated in the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister on the 5th July that food committees were being constituted throughout the whole Province of Bengal and the object of the food committees was to bring about a more equitable distribution of food. That was the position that was taken by the Hon'ble Minister on the 5th July, 1943. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the food committees since they have been constituted are not functioning, not to speak of bringing about an equitable distribution of food throughout the Province. After the food drive we found that the situation went on deteriorating, price of rice and paddy was rising not only in the city of Calcutta, but it was consistently rising throughout the Province of Bengal. Then on the 26th of August last came the Government order controlling the price of rice and paddy. The rate was fixed at Rs. 30 per maund for wholesale transaction and at Rs. 32 per maund for retail sale. These rates prevailed up to 10th September, 1943. Then on the 10th September the price of rice was controlled at Rs. 24 for wholesale business and at Rs. 26 for retail transactions. That is the position at the present moment. Sir, our contention has always been that the price should be controlled in order to lower down the price but along with price control there must be a regular supply of foodstuffs. Without a corresponding supply mere price control has no effect, and the result has been disastrous. It is well known that since 10th September rice and paddy have altogether disappeared from the market. The Kurigram local market is without any rice and paddy. There is no paddy and flour in Narayanganj. There was no rice and *atta* in the local market at Bagerhat. Immediately on the promulgation of the Price Ordinance all rice and paddy disappeared from the Comilla market. I may tell the House that on the 12th September I was at Comilla and I knew that

rice was not available on that day in Comilla. The press report is that no rice was available; only fine *atap* rice was available and that was selling at Rs. 70 per maund. This is the situation in the mufassal. I personally know that since the 10th of September when the price was controlled at Rs. 24 for wholesale transactions and at Rs. 26 for retail transactions no rice was available at Comilla. The same is the case in Barisal. This is the position in Bengal; this is the picture of rural Bengal. The picture of Calcutta needs no portrayal; it is well known to you all. It is almost impossible to describe what is happening in the city of Calcutta. Sir, if an attempt is made to describe the real situation in Bengal, at once comes a statement from authoritative quarters that it is over dramatised. That is the statement that is often made by the Hon'ble Minister in charge. Then it appears that during this period from the 26th August to 10th of September, there was a press-note issued by Mr. N. C. Chakrabarty, Relief Organisation Officer, that they were not satisfied with the food committees, and that they wanted to organise union relief committees in the Province. The food committees are not functioning; the union relief committees will have to be constituted. I do not know if and when these union relief committees will be constituted and will be functioning. That is the question I put to the Hon'ble Minister. I want to know how many union relief committees are going to be constituted in each district, district by district, and also what are the functions of those committees.

Sir, the present economic position of Bengal, especially of rural Bengal, is certainly known to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies. He knows also that the steps taken by the present Ministry since their assumption of office on the 24th April, 1943, have been found to be completely ineffective to deal with the situation. Something wrong must have been there in the administration, and we have to find out that wrong and remedy the mistake. We are prepared to sit together in a spirit of compromise, not in a spirit of recrimination for we do not like it, we are prepared to sit together and find out the ways and means as to how to meet the situation. If the situation is not immediately taken under control, I say at least one crore of the population of Bengal will die of starvation It seems to me that we are a cruel and hard-hearted set of men if we do not find out an immediate remedy to save our dying people. We have seen pathetic scenes which it is impossible to describe. Sir, it is impossible to come out in the streets of Calcutta, not only in the streets of Calcutta but everywhere, in towns and in villages. I have seen persons dying of starvation in the streets of Comilla. On the 12th September last I went out in the early morning and I found in front of a rich man's house a child lying dead on the pavement of a street. One who has got eyes and one whose heart has not been turned into stone cannot get out in the street. It seems to me that on account of the war and on account of the barbarities committed throughout the world, we have also become cruel. The steps that have been taken are faulty and are not effective. They have not produced the means that should be devised. For that I beg to suggest that the constructive suggestions, as embodied in the resolution of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal are worthy of consideration.

Sir, I have got some feelings but it is impossible to speak publicly what I feel in the matter. If I can meet the Hon'ble Minister I can tell him what are the reasons for which we cannot deal with the situation. There has been shortage no doubt, but, Sir, in spite of shortage it seems to me that there is greed in the traders—not only greed in the traders but I find there is greed in the rich cultivator. The rich cultivator does not like to part with his rice. As soon as price is controlled, he does not bring his stocks in the market. He may be satisfied with Rs. 30 or Rs. 35 but he is not satisfied with Rs. 26 which is the controlled price.

Sir, something has gone wrong and we must devise ways and means by sitting together. We must appeal to the people and point out that those who have got rice should not be so greedy.

Sir, I find that the districts which are in charge of European officers are the worst sufferers because these European officers are absolutely callous. They say, "Had this country been invaded by Japan, a larger number of people would have died. You are dying of starvation but the number is now not so appalling. We have prevented invasion and if the country would have been invaded, there would have been many more deaths." So, they are absolutely callous.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find that the officers who are placed to execute the schemes are also corrupt. The Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Civil Supplies Department probably is aware that in his department there are corruption and bribery. It is regrettable that there are corruption and bribery. We find corruption and bribery amongst our people. It is not only painful but it is shameful. We have really lost our character. We should sit together and devise ways and means for removing corruption and bribery because we may devise schemes but somebody must be there to execute those schemes, and if those persons who are entrusted with the work of execution are found to be corrupt, there is no way of solving the problem

Sir, this is the situation in the country and it must be tackled. If the Ministry fail to tackle the situation, the only honourable course open to them is to resign and hand over the administration to those who have looted the country in the past and are doing so at present.

(Here the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the situation we are discussing this afternoon is practically very awful and it is a matter of great regret that the Government is not rising still up to the situation. During the continuance of the last Ministry when a certain section of the people were supposed to be deprived from the A.R.P. services a good deal of fuss was made in the country by the party now in power, but when people are dying in the streets of starvation—there is not a single village where it is possible to find out a man who can have two meals with satisfaction every day—we find that in Government benches people are sitting tight and are not as anxious for the dying people as they were for the services in the A.R.P. organisation. When Mr. Fazlul Huq was the Chief Minister only

the other day we heard the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy saying that the Province of Bengal had been turned into a province of beggars and that self-respect of the country had gone and every street of Calcutta was nothing but a cluster of beggars. There I think the conscience of Mr. Suhrawardy pricked only because he was out of power. As he is in power now his conscience is blunt, and when people are dying under his very nose he is sitting idle and tight in his office. During the few months he is in office nobody found him in any mufassal town, not to speak of village, and see with his own eyes the actual condition of the country.

Sir, one of my friends reminds me that he is active, but active in another way. It is stated that he is active in getting some money in his pocket and it is also reported——

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: What do you mean by that, you blackguard?

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: You thief, you get out of this chamber.

(Loud noise and cries of "withdraw", "withdraw" and "get out", from Opposition benches.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Suhrawardy, I ask you to withdraw the expression.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I request you to ask the honourable member to withdraw that charge.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is for me to see You first withdraw your remark.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Yes, I withdraw the expression.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Shamsuddin, you will also withdraw your expression.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Yes, I withdraw.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: It is a very serious charge to make. I have tried to give a clean administration to the best of my ability.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It was up to you to come for your rescue to the Chair.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Mr. Suhrawardy was out of his temper, I think, without getting the full meaning of the term I used. What I meant was he was taking some money in his pocket by way of monthly salary and he was not discharging his duties as a salaried Minister of the Government of Bengal.

Now, it is a broad fact and an established fact that Bengal is a deficit Province so far as rice is concerned and when Burma fell it became very much significant that from that country we could not get a single grain of rice. Instead of arranging for bringing rice from other countries the

Government of Bengal, especially the executive part of it took recourse to a denial policy and they appointed some favourite merchants of theirs to purchase rice from most of the districts of Bengal where surplus rice could be got. These merchants of whom Messrs. Ispahani were one got money from the Government and got unrestricted power to purchase rice. They had no direction either for depositing rice for the future use of the Province and it was reported in responsible quarters also that they exported rice to several countries including Persia, Egypt and Ceylon. Though vast amount of rice was purchased still we do not get any account of it. Some questions were put in this Assembly as to the amount of rice that was exported through the agency of the Government and through private persons, patronised merchants of the Government, but unfortunately no clear account was given up to this time.

It is a matter also to be considered whether Government from the very beginning followed a policy of indecision. First, there was a custom of free trade in the country. After that restriction was imposed on the movement of rice. As soon as the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy and his party came to power they took away that restriction and imposed free trade. Again that restriction came into being. In this way merchants and people became panicky and the black market was the result.

Another policy of indiscretion followed by the Government was that they advanced money to Government officers to hoard rice at least for six months. The big companies followed and when hoarding practically became a fashion at that time the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy became conscious and began anti-hoard drive. Unfortunately, Calcutta and industrial areas, the city of the big companies who are the greatest hoarders, were excluded for the time being, and also the tea gardens of North Bengal and other parts of Bengal were excluded and it is reported that in these tea gardens enormous quantities of rice were hoarded for their future use that could go for three years. Now, at the pressure of public opinion again Mr. Suhrawardy tried to have a census of the so-called industrial areas including Calcutta and Howrah, but during that time these merchants removed their rice and it is reported also that foodgrains were kept in the Bay of Bengal by hiring steamers and boats from big companies of Calcutta This is a clear indication that the indecision of the Government was solely responsible for the crisis that now prevails in Bengal.

I submit, Sir, that the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy by his temperament and by his habit is not a fit person to handle so important a portfolio. His political career and his economic life are not free from doubt. Socially also he is quite unfit being the son of a High Court Judge, the son-in-law of Sir Abdur Rahim——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. You cannot bring all these things.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Being the son of a High Court Judge, the son-in-law of Sir Abdur Rahim, a nephew of Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy and Sir Hasan Suhrawardy——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Sarkar, I think this is absolutely irrelevant.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: These gentlemen had no connection or sympathy for the masses. Then, again, politically he was under the tutelage of the late Mr. C. R. Das and after that he came under the influence of Mina Peshwari and subsequently he has fallen into the clutches of Ispahani & Company.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will those things be expunged from the proceedings?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will look into it.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. I want your ruling as to whether these irrelevant things which have been referred to will be expunged from the proceedings.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Sarkar, I have already said that these things are irrelevant. You ought not to have said all these things again.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Therefore, Sir, I am simply rising on a point of privilege as to whether these things should be removed from the proceedings.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That will be considered after we go through the proceedings.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: His economic life is not also free from doubt. When he was in the Calcutta Corporation as Deputy Mayor——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will not allow this sort of thing.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: His economic life is not also free from doubt——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. I will not allow this sort of personal attack.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: I bow down, Sir, to your ruling. During the last regimé there was also clamour against that Ministry. That Ministry bungled the *fatka* situation, that Ministry bungled the burning problem of the day, namely, the food problem. When the question of food situation arose at the time of the fall of Burma, they followed a policy of drift, and when Mr. Suhrawardy and party came to power, they mismanaged the thing in a way——

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: On a point of privilege, Sir. Where is the Minister for Food? (Uproar.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: He does not listen to this nonsense.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: A thing seems to be nonsense to that gentleman whom it pinches. Anything which is not palatable to him is nonsense.

Coming to the present problem, Sir, I submit that the present Ministry has totally failed to solve the problem, as will be very clear from the statement of the honourable gentleman that spoke before me. Now one question I must bring to the notice of this House in particular. During the recent Food Drive movement some food committees were established and these food committees though not representative in character were, I think, working. Now under the instruction of Government published in the name of one of the Deputy Secretaries of the Agriculture Department these food committees are practically abolished and new committees are being established with the help of the Jute Department. If one policy is carried to a particular point and again it is changed and nothing is done to solve the problem, I think the country will be in a position where within the next two months at least 50 lakhs of people will die. When the new Ministry came into power people expected that they will make extensive propaganda for growing more food. They have signally failed and I submit that this Ministry should go out of office.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Speaker সাহেব, মন্ত্রী মহোদয় এখানে অনুপস্থিত। আমি অনেকগুলি কথা তাঁকে জানাতে চাই যেগুলি কার্য্যকরী হওয়ার জন্য তাঁর থাকা প্রয়োজন। আশা করি তিনি আসবেন। যখন গত মন্ত্রিসভা Governmentএর অনুসৃত নীতির সঙ্গে সামঞ্জস্য রক্ষা করে চলতে পারছিলেন না, তারা জানিয়েছিলেন Governorকে, যে নীতিতে Government পরিচালিত হচ্ছে তাতে বাংলার অদূরেই ভীষণ দুর্ভিক্ষ দেখা দেবে এবং সেই একটা প্রধান কারণ ছিল গত মন্ত্রিসভাকে পদচ্যুত করার। তারপর যখন এই নূতন মন্ত্রিসভার আবির্ভাব হলো তখন আমরা এই আশঙ্কা করেছিলাম যে এই মন্ত্রিসভা সেই Government অনুসৃত নীতির অনুসরণ করে জাতিকে ধ্বংসের পথে পরিচালিত করবে। যখন বাংলার চারিদিকে হাহাকার আর্ত্তনাদে বাংলার আকাশ বাতাস মুখরিত হয়ে উঠলো তখন আমরা দেখতে পেলাম যে আমাদের বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী তাঁদের পূর্ব্ব অনুসৃত ঘোষণাকে—বাংলায় খাদ্যের অভাব নাই—অসার প্রতিপন্ন করে আবার এই কথা স্বীকার করতে বাধ্য হলেন যে বাংলায় বাস্তবিক খাদ্যের অভাব আছে এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তিনি এ কথাও জানালেন এই যে পূর্ব্বে ভুল কথা হয়েছিল সমস্ত ভারতবর্ষ এবং ভারতের Governmentকে জানিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছিল যে বাংলায় খাদ্যের অভাব নেই, শুধু দুষ্ট মহাজন এবং দুষ্ট কৃষকের দল খাদ্যকে সঞ্চিত রেখে বাংলায় এই দুর্ভিক্ষের সৃষ্টি করেছে। সেই কথা যখন তাঁর এই food driveএ অসার প্রতিপন্ন হয়ে বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে, সহরে সহরে, মানুষের বুভুক্ষিত নরনারীর আর্ত্তনাদ মুখরিত হয়ে উঠলো, যখন কলিকাতার রাজপথ শত শত মৃত নরদেহের দ্বারা পিচ্ছিল হয়ে উঠলো তখন তিনি বললেন যে একটা কাজ হয়েছে—আমি যে ভুল করেছিলাম সেই ভুলের প্রায়শ্চিত্ত বাংলার শত শত, সহস্র সহস্র নরনারী তাদের জীবন দিয়ে করলো। এখন সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষ জানতে পেরেছে বাংলার দুর্দ্দশার কথা। তিনি এই মৃত ব্যক্তিদের উদ্দেশ্যে তাঁর অন্তরের ধন্যবাদ জ্ঞাপন করলেন। তারা অন্ততঃ ভারতবর্ষের সর্ব্বত্র সমবেদনা জাগ্রত করেছে এবং আশা করি বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিসভারও সমবেদনা জাগ্রত করেছে এবং সেই ভরসা রেখেই আমি কতকগুলি বিষয় মন্ত্রিসভার গোচরে আনবো।

প্রথমতঃ কথা হচ্ছে এই যে বরিশালে কিছু দিন পূর্ব্বে বাংলার মন্ত্রিসভার একজন ভদ্রলোক গিয়েছিলেন। তিনি একজন মন্ত্রী। সভায় যখন তাঁকে এই বর্ত্তমান দুর্দ্দশা সম্বন্ধে প্রশ্ন জিজ্ঞাসা

করা হ'লো তিনি কোন উত্তর না দিয়ে মস্ত বড় একটা আশ্বাস দিয়ে এসেছেন: "দেখুন, যে দুর্দ্দিন এসে উপস্থিত হয়েছে তাতে হাজার হাজার লোক মরবে, নিশ্চয় মরবে, কিন্তু সেজন্য কেউ ঘাবড়াবেন না। বহু লোক মরবে বটে কিন্তু যারা জীবিত থাকবে তাদের ভিতর থেকে নূতন বাংলার সৃষ্টি হবে। যারা মরবে তারা ত মরবেই; কিন্তু যারা জীবিত থাকবে তাদের মধ্য দিয়ে নূতন বাংলার সৃষ্টি হবে।" এই আশ্বাস যদি বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর মুখপাত্ররূপে তিনি করে থাকেন (A voice: আমাদের মণ্ডল মহাশয়।) তবে এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর কাছে আশ্বাস পাওয়ার কিছু নেই। আমরা মাত্র অপেক্ষা করবো সেই ভবিষ্যতের জন্য যখন ঐ যাঁরা বেঁচে থাকবেন তাঁদের মধ্য দিয়ে ভবিষ্যৎ বাংলাদেশ গড়ে উঠবে। এই সুখ-স্বপ্ন নিয়ে আমাদের থাকতে হবে। এখন কথা হচ্ছে যে বাংলার গ্রামে গ্রামে আজ দারুণ বুভুক্ষার হাহাকার উঠেছে যা আপনারা হয়ত অনেকেই শুনে থাকবেন। বরিশাল চালের একটা surplus district; সেই বরিশালের কথাই আমি বলবো। সেই বরিশাল সহরে কালেক্টরীর কয়েক গজের মধ্যে এই দিন ১০।১২ আগে একটি মৃতদেহকে কুকুরে ভক্ষণ করেছে। সহরের উপর, বরিশাল সহরেই যদি এই সম্ভাবনা হতে পারে তাহলে অন্যান্য যায়গা সম্বন্ধে আমাদের অবস্থা যে কি প্রকার মর্ম্মন্তুদ তা সহজেই আমরা অনুমান করতে পারি। ভোলা আমাদের বরিশালের মধ্যে সব চেয়ে বেশী বিপন্ন হয়েছে। বিরাট বন্যা প্লাবনের ধাক্কা সামলাতে না সামলাতে সেখানে ভীষণ দুর্ভিক্ষ উপস্থিত হয়ে সেখানে সহস্র সহস্র লোক মারা যাচ্ছে। শুধু সে কথা নয়: মানুষের কি অবস্থা হলে নিজের ছেলে মেয়েকে বিক্রী করে সেটা হয়ত আমাদের মধ্যে কেউ কল্পনা করতে পারবো না; কিন্তু ভোলা হতে এবং নোয়াখালি হতে শত শত ছেলে মেয়েকে চালান দেওয়া হচ্চে পটুয়াখালির বাজারে। আজ এই বিংশ শতাব্দীতে প্রকাশ্য বাজারে ছেলে মেয়ে বিক্রী হচ্চে। ৫৲ টাকা থেকে ৪০৲ টাকা তাদের দাম। (A voice: কে কিনছে?) সে যায়গার যারা স্থানীয় কৃষক, যারা এই দুর্দ্দিনে ধান চাল বিক্রী করে লাভবান হয়েছে তারা কিনছে। আমাদের আবদুল ওয়াহেব খান সাহেবকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলে, তিনিও বলতে পারবেন, তিনি District Boardএর Chairman আছেন, তিনি সংবাদ জানেন। এখন কথা হচ্চে এই যে এই ভাবে বরিশালের প্রকাশ্য বাজারে ছেলে মেয়ে বিক্রী হচ্ছে। ভোলা হতে যত ছেলে মেয়ে আসছে তার মধ্যে শতকরা প্রায় ৯৮ জন মুসলমান, এবং ২ জন হিন্দু এবং নমঃশূদ্র। আমি ভোলা গিয়েছিলাম। সেখানকার শোচনীয় অবস্থা আমি নিজে স্বচক্ষে দেখেছি যে ব্রাহ্মণের বিধবা সে অপরের মুখের উচ্ছিষ্ট তাল চিবিয়ে খাচ্ছে। তাকে যখন বলা হোলো উচ্ছিষ্ট তাল খেও না, তোমাকে ভাল দেবো, সে বললে "আগে খেয়ে নি"। (A voice: ভাল কথা, সামাজিক reform হচ্চে, ভাল ত!) আজ মানুষ অপরের পরিত্যক্ত উচ্ছিষ্ট জিনিষকে রাস্তা থেকে কুড়িয়ে, ব্রাহ্মণের বিধবা পর্য্যন্ত যারা অপরের স্পৃষ্ট এমন কি ব্রাহ্মণের অন্ন পর্য্যন্ত খায় না, তারা ভক্ষণ করে। আমরা দেখেছি যে আমাদের সমস্ত পাড়ার বাড়ীতে যে সমস্ত বুভুক্ষিত ছেলে মেয়ে এসেছে তারা সাহস করে চায় নি যে আমাকে ভাত দিন। তারা এসে জিজ্ঞাসা করেছে যে একটু ফেন্ খেতে পায় কি না। যদি কেউ জোর করে ভাতের কথাও বলেছে তারা কখনও বলে না যে আমাদের ভরা পেট ভাত দাও। তারা বলেছে যে এক মুঠো ভাত দিন, বেশী চায় না। কি প্রকারের অবস্থা হলে পর বুভুক্ষিত লোক এসে ভিক্ষা পর্য্যন্ত করতে সাহস করছে না, সেই মর্ম্মন্তুদ অবস্থা বাংলার বরিশাল জেলায়, যেটাকে এখনও পর্য্যন্ত লোকে মনে করে বাংলার গোলাঘর, এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আমরা দেখতে পাচ্ছি যে হাজার হাজার মণ চাল flatএ করে রপ্তানি হয়ে যাচ্ছে বরিশাল থেকে। বরিশালের অন্যান্য যায়গা থেকে ত বটেই

এমন কি যে ভোলা সব চেয়ে বিপন্ন, সেই ভোলা থেকে পর্য্যন্ত রপ্তানি হয়ে যাচ্ছে। আমি কিছুদিন পূর্ব্বে ভোলায় গিয়েছিলাম। সেখানে gruel kitchen দেখেছি। শত শত লোক খেতে আসছে, তাদের পা ফুলে যাচ্ছে এবং স্থানীয় একজন আমাকে বললেন যে এখন লোক কমে যাচ্ছে। আমি বললাম যে আজকাল কমে গেল কেন? বললে, মহাশয় যে খিচুড়ী লোপ্সী দেওয়া হয় তার মাধ্যে বাজরা আছে, সেই বাজরা খেয়ে বহু লোক মারা যাচ্ছে, পেটের অসুখে ভুগছে, তারা আসতে পারছে না। সেই বাজরা দেওয়া হয়েছে সেখানে যে ভোলা থেকে শত শত, সহস্র সহস্র মণ চাল সেদিনও বাইরে রপ্তানি হয়েছে। চাল নাই বলেই বাজরা দিচ্ছে কিন্তু সেই বাজরা বজ্র হয়ে তাদের উদরাময় রোগের সৃষ্টি করেছে, তাদের মৃত্যু আগিয়ে দিচ্ছে। তারপরে, এই ভাব যখন বরিশাল জেলায় চলছে, অন্যান্য জেলার কথা আর কি বলব। আমি বাঁকুড়া জেলার কথা শুনেছি সেখানে শেয়াল কুকুর প্রকাশ্য দিবালোকে নরদেহ ভক্ষণ করছে এবং অন্য লোক যখন সেই শেয়াল কুকুরকে তাড়িয়ে সেই দেহকে উদ্ধার করতে যায় শেয়াল কুকুর রুখে দাঁড়িয়ে মুখ খিচিয়ে পাল্টা আক্রমণ করছে। কি অবস্থা হলে মানুষের এই দুরবস্থা হতে পারে। বাস্তবিক মানুষ খেয়ে খেয়ে তাদের সাহস এমন দুনিবার হয়ে উঠেছে। আমি ৭৬এর মন্বন্তরের কথা শুনেছি, কিন্তু তাতেও তেমন ভয়াবহ দৃশ্য, বঙ্কিমবাবুর অমর লেখনীর ভিতরও পরিস্ফুট হয়ে উঠতে পারেনি যা আমরা স্বচক্ষে দেখছি। ৭৬এর মন্বন্তরে ছিল ভগবানের অভিসম্পাত ও দেশে শস্য জন্মায় নি। (Hear the speaker reaches the time limit) আরো ২।৩ মিনিট আমি বলবো, আমাকে সময় দেবেন। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমানে যে অবস্থা এসেছে সেখানে প্রকৃতির দান অপ্রচুর এ আমরা বলতে পারি না। পূর্ব্ব পূর্ব্ব বৎসরের মতন গতবারও ধান হয়েছিল। এখানে যত কিছু হয়েছে, মানুষের দুর্ব্বুদ্ধি, মানুষের দুর্নীতি, মানুষের দারুণ লোভ এবং যারা এই মানুষকে রক্ষা করবার জন্য দায়ী সেই Governmentএর দারুণ লোভ এবং দুর্নীতিই এই বর্ত্তমান অবস্থার সৃষ্টি করেছে। ৭৬এর মন্বন্তরের যায়গায় পঞ্চাশ সনের মহা-মন্বন্তরের উদ্ভব হয়েছে। কিন্তু এই দুঃখের মধ্যেও আবার Governmentএর নীতি আর একটা ভীষণ অবস্থার সৃষ্টি করেছে। এই মাত্র আমি চিঠি পেয়েছি ঢাকা জেলার জয়পাড়া গ্রাম থেকে। আমাকে লিখছেন যে সেখানে কিছুদিন পূর্ব্বে মুসলমান Union Boardএর President হিন্দু এবং মুসলমানের জন্য দুটো আলাদা লঙ্গরখানা খুলেছিলেন। ৪ দিন চলার পর ঢাকা থেকে Special officer এসে হিন্দু লঙ্গরখানা তুলে দিয়ে বলে দিয়েছে যে মুসলমানের পাক করা হিন্দুর খেতে ইচ্ছা হয় খাবে না হয় না খাবে। একেই ত দেশের মধ্যে দারুণ দুর্দ্দশা, তার মধ্যে আবার এমনি ভাবে Government officials যেয়ে হিন্দুর উপর এই ভাবে অত্যাচার করতে উদ্যত হয় সেই হিন্দু লঙ্গরখানা তুলে দিয়ে তাদের বাধ্য করানো হয় মুসলমানের পাক খেতে তা'হলে সরকারী নীতি সমালোচনার অযোগ্য হয়ে উঠে। আমি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি এই দিকে যে তাঁদের নীতি কি বাস্তবিক এই যে হিন্দুদের বাধ্য করা হবে এই দারুণ দুর্দ্দিনে মুসলমানদের পাক খেতে? আমি জানতে চাই Governmentএর কাছে পরিষ্কাররূপে যে যদি তাদের এই নীতি হয় তাঁরা ঘোষণা করুন; আর যদি নীতি তা না হয় তবে এই সব Special officerদের তাঁরা জানিয়ে দিন যে এ পন্থা যেন তাঁরা অবলম্বন না করেন।

দ্বিতীয়তঃ আর একটা কাজ হচ্চে ration card সম্বন্ধে। বরিশালে আমরা দেখেছি যে গরীবদের জন্য ration card issue করা হয়। বরিশালের যে Committee ration card issue করে, সে Committeeর memberরা আমাদের বলেছে যে তারা হাজার জন্যে

জন্য recommend করলে Government officials বললে যে ২০০ দিতে হবে। তারা বাধ্য হয়ে হাজারকে ২০০ করলো, কিন্তু Government officials নিজেরা আবার ration card issue করলেন নিজেদের চাকর-বাকরদের পরিবারের নামে। বরিশালের A. D. M. নিজ বাবুর্চির জন্য চার খানা issue করেছেন; ভোলার S. D. O. তাঁর চাকর-বাকরের নামে ১৪ খানা issue করেছেন বলে শুনেছি। এই দারুণ দুর্দ্দিনে যে সমস্ত officialsদের উপর ভার দেওয়া হয়েছে গরীবকে বাঁচাবার জন্য তাঁরা চাকর-বাকরের ration cardএর মধ্যে দিয়ে যদি আপনার সুবিধা করে নিতে পারে তাহলে গরীব বুভুক্ষিত লোক পাবে কি? আজ আমি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে বলছি যে তিনি দেখুন যে যেটুকু সাহায্য করবার ব্যবস্থা Government থেকে হয়েছে তা অতি অপ্রচুর কি না। দৈনিক আড়াই ছটাক মাত্র সেখানে চাল, ডাল এবং বাজরা খেতে দেওয়া হয়। আমি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে বলছি তিনি যে কোন ডাক্তারের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করুন, ঐ আড়াই ছটাক খেয়ে কোন লোক বেশী দিন বাঁচতে পারে কি না? অন্ততঃ পাঁচ ছটাকের কম খেয়ে মানুষ কিছুতেই বাঁচতে পারে না, একজন পূর্ণবয়স্ক লোক সমস্ত দিনে। কাজেই যদি বাঁচাবার উদ্দেশ্য থাকে—অবশ্য অনেককে তাঁরা বাঁচাবেন না বা বাঁচাবার চেষ্টাও করতে পারবেন না, আমি জানি—তাহলে যাদের সম্বন্ধে চেষ্টা চলছে তারা অন্ততঃ যাতে বাঁচে, শুধু একটা মস্ত বড় উপহাস এবং পরিহাস করে তাদের খেতে দিলাম বলে মরণের পথে ঠেলে না দিয়ে, তাদের জন্য অন্ততঃ পাঁচ ছটাক ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য আমি মন্ত্রী মহাশয়ের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি।

সর্বশেষে আমি এই কথা বলে বিদায় নিচ্ছি আজ যে দারুণ দুর্দ্দশা আমাদের এসেছে তাতে কে মন্ত্রী থাকবে বা না থাকবে সেটা আমাদের প্রশ্ন নয়, নাজিমুদ্দিন মন্ত্রী থাকুন বা সুরাওয়ার্দ্দি মন্ত্রী থাকুন তাতে আমাদের কোন আপত্তি নেই। আমরা বলছি, আসুন আমরা সকলে মিলে বাংলাকে বাঁচাই, বাংলার কোটি কোটি বুভুক্ষিত নরনারীকে বাঁচাবার জন্য সকলে প্রাণপণ চেষ্টা করি। (A voice: এদিকে আসুন।) এদিকে থেকেও আপনাদের সহযোগিতা করবো।

Khan Bahadur FAZLUL QADIR: Sir, for about a month I am associated with the food situation in Chittagong. I have seen many controlled shops and kitchens—both Government and private, a rice mill and other licenced shops where flour, *atta*, and sugar are being sold at controlled rates and the system of issuing Ration Cards.

First of all, I cannot but congratulate the Government and the local officers for their zeal and earnestness in meeting the most serious situation, especially the efforts of the late Mr. Jameson. The condition of the town has much improved since March last and has been brought under control. What I think just and plain truth, is that if I do not state those facts it will be unjust on my part. I express my grateful thanks to Mr. M. A. Ispahani for his great sacrifice in foregoing a profit of some 40 lakhs of rupees. The attitude which my countrymen have adopted at this crucial moment is not praiseworthy. Of course there are few exceptions but the general tendency is to demand everything to be done by the Government and we are to sit tight and look to our own comforts only. We forgot altogether the duties of citizens. We have some parts to play to ameliorate the condition of sufferers. The traders are on the look-out to suck the blood of their countrymen. They wanted to remove the controlled price and they got it

for six months. What they have done within this period? They said that if controlled price be withdrawn, then there will be free circulation of foodstuffs and there will be general competition amongst the traders and the price will go down. But till now we see no sign of it, rather market is going up. So we think Government is justified in fixing the maximum price of rice. There is no rice in Chittagong town. All rice has disappeared and the local merchants have stopped dealing in rice, for, some of them were arrested for profiteering and black marketing in sugar. Government supplied *bajra* but we do not know the use of it.

What the intelligentsia and other leading citizens are doing to meet the situation? What organisation or propaganda work they have done so long? Only I find that a few philanthropic merchants opened kitchens to supply food to the hungry beggars in addition to the five kitchens opened by the Government. They have earned the everlasting gratitude of the poor. It is worth mentioning here that Mr. Farid Ahmed Choudhury is feeding about 500 beggars with *khichuri* at his Andarkilla residence daily. Besides, he paid Rs. 2,000 to the food committee. K. S. Haji Miyan Khan, Mr. Adalat Khan and other merchants of Khatunganj are feeding 500 to 600 beggars, and Maulvi Islam Khan Choudhuri is feeding about 500 beggars at the shrine of Nazir Shah. All are being fed with *khichuri* daily once between 5 and 6 p.m. Formerly Government used to feed the poor with *jau* but since the visit of the Hon'ble Chief Minister it has been improved to some extent.

A food committee has been formed with Mr. M. M. Stuart, District Magistrate, as its President, and Rai Sahib N. M. Bardhan as Secretary with some other members. The committee has raised about Rs. 30,000 as public donation and is supplying rice at the controlled rate (Rs. 15 per maund) to the organisers of the private relief kitchens opened at town. They are also rendering help to the villagers. This is of course commendable. The district authorities have also sent some rice to the unions to sell at the controlled price to the poor and middle class people who do not like to go to relief kitchen opened at each union. Flour, *atta*, sugar and millets have also been sent to unions to sell at controlled rate. This arrangement should be continued. Now I see the Bengal Government following Chittagong in every line of relief work enunciated at Chittagong. Ration Cards were first introduced in March last and food committee (District Relief Fund Committee) was also formed some months ago. The Bengal Government is now introducing the Ration Card system and has started a Central Relief Fund Committee. These are all noble projects which ought to be highly appreciated. Of course there are some defects in the system: these should be removed at an early date. As Chittagong is an emergent and vulnerable area and eastern frontier of India, it can claim preferential treatment and deserves special consideration as it is the worst sufferer in all matters in comparison with other districts of Bengal, nay of India. I would therefore suggest the following measures to be adopted soon and draw the immediate attention of the District authorities and the Government:—

(1) *Ration Cards.*—The Notice issued by the District Magistrate on 22nd July, 1943, and the statement made by the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy.

Minister of Civil Supply, dated the 5th July, 1943, in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, extracts of which are noted below.

Extract of Notice issued by the District Magistrate, on 22nd July, 1943.

".....Rs. 25 per month is the limit except that it increases or decreases by Rs. 2 for every member of a family in excess or short of 5. Children below 3 are not counted and between 3 and 12 are on half....."

Extract from the statement of the Supply Minister, dated the 5th July, 1943.

"Turning now to Calcutta..... As a beginning, it has been proposed to ration messing groups in receipt of an average *per capita* income of Rs. 20 per mensem or less so far as rice is concerned In mufassal towns, rationing should similarly take place "

From the close study of the above notice and statement we find that Calcutta people are more fortunate than Chittagong in respect of supply of foodstuffs and Ration Cards. The income of the people of Calcutta is Rs. 20 *per capita* per mensem while that of Chittagong is Rs. 25 per family which has been generally adopted for eligibility of getting Ration Cards. This differential treatment has caused grave resentment to the hearts of the people of Chittagong. A deputation waited upon the Hon'ble Chief Minister on the 5th August last to redress the grievances of the people of Chittagong but nothing has yet been done. The people of Chittagong particularly claim the same sorts of privileges that are being given or proposed to be given to the people of Calcutta. Rather they demand more liberal and generous treatment in all respects for being in danger zones and subjected to constant bombing by the enemy. They urge for the serious consideration of Government.

(2) Ration coupons should be distributed on or before the first day of the month.

(3) Controlled shops should remain open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. so that there should not be any rush of people.

(4) Rice should be supplied bi-weekly so that there may not be any difficulty in distributing it to the public and keep them waiting for a long time.

(5) Occasional inspection and surprise visit should be arranged to stop the black marketing in all shops either controlled or licensed to sell foodstuffs and kerosine oil at controlled rate.

(6) Within the municipal area Ward Food Committee be formed with officials and non-officials to supervise the controlled shops or do other organisation.

(7) Rice milled in Chittagong mills are simply detached from husk. It should be polished to some extent.

(8) Signboard should be given in all controlled shops stating the rate of foodstuff and the limit of goods to be supplied to each person. To check the double sale and cheating names of purchasers should be noted.

(9) Union Village Food Committees should be directed to organise *mushti bhikhya* system in their unions and realise the alms from the families who have got cultivation and other means of livelihood in order to help the poor and supplement the Government kitchens. For collection of *mushti bikhya* volunteers should be organised under the auspices of the Village Food Committee.

I have represented many of the above facts to the District Magistrate and the Divisional Commissioner and hope that the Hon'ble Minister after hard struggle whatever is getting for us, he should see that we may not be deprived from his gift and his assurances are fully complied with.

Khan Bahadur A. M. L. RAHMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, after all that has been said by the other members of this House I do not propose to take much time of the House, but I simply want to draw the attention of the Goverment and the honourable members of the House to the bitter truth that there are some distressed areas in Bengal in which there is such a scarcity of food that relief work has become almost an impossibility. One instance of that is Nilphamari in the district of Rangpur. I have just come from Nilphamari which is admitted on all hands to be the most distressed area in North Bengal. Government have opened some gruel kitchens and non-official organisations have also started work but my information which I carefully collected is that the quantity of rice available there is practically nil. Neither gruel kitchens nor non-official organisations can continue to do any good work if food is not available quickly for distribution. The conditions that I witnessed with my own eyes are dreadful beyond words. I need not go into the harrowing details of that gruesome spectacle, but, Sir, let me submit to the House that death rate and particularly infant mortality is apalling and unless foodgrains are despatched at once the entire subdivision will be littered with the dead in the next two months. Cholera has already taken a very heavy toll. Months of continued hardship has so lowered the physical resistance of the poor that delay in supply simply means inevitable death of struggling humanity.

Sir, to my intense surprise I found that the hospital at Nilphamari stood in urgent need of fund for food and treatment of emergency cases admitted now. Medicine is also an immediate necessity to the dispensary there to meet the situation. To save that countryside from utter ruin and desolation foodgrains and medicine have to be rushed at once. We have had enough of statements and counter-statements, enough recriminations, but I hope, Sir, all that will be stopped now and Government will not waste a moment's time to save precious human lives.

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: Sir, having had no opportunity to visit other parts of Bengal I do not find myself in a position to speak generally for the province as a whole. Whatever I may say I will say only with reference to my district. Except that I have difference of opinion with the present Ministry with regard to some minor details of their policy I do not think I have much to say against the general policy they have adopted for the solution of the food problem.

Sir, this evening in view of the gravity of the situation and the ghastly scenes which we see every day around us I have decided, being fully conscious of offending the conventions of Western parliamentary practice, to speak out my mind freely without fear or favour from any party. Sir, I am sorry to say that so far as the execution of the policy is concerned I must as one belonging to the Ministerial Party admit that this Government has signally failed. So far as the execution of the policy is concerned I am definitely of opinion that they have signally failed. ("Hear", "hear" from the Opposition Benches.)

Sir, here is Mr. Suhrawardy sitting and I wish this evening to speak straight to him some of his defects which, I think, are responsible for the failure of his policy, and when I do so I can assure him that I shall do so in the spirit of a friend. Ever since he assumed the responsibility of the Supply Department he became so busy that he became absolutely immobile. I had occasions to visit his office several times at No. 7, Church Lane. There I found him closetted with a large number of men and I do not know why he kept members of his party and representatives of rural Bengal sitting outside his office for hours only to be told at last that he had no time to talk to them In fact I had occasion to wait for 3 hours and 30 minutes. Sir, in order that there may be success in the execution of this food policy it is absolutely necessary that the Government should come in direct touch with the people. However much busy he may be his remaining will not heal our sores.

Sir, in Burdwan recently we had floods. So far as I know Mr. Suhrawardy I am of opinion that he has sufficient intelligence and diligence but, Sir, I have begun feeling that he lacks considerably the qualities of heart which are necessary at this crisis to solve this mighty problem As I have said, we had floods in our district Immediately after the floods I addressed a letter to the Hon'ble Minister giving some vivid picture of the sufferings of my district Far from coming to Burdwan, far from giving any sympathetic reply to that letter, the Hon'ble Minister had not even the time or the courtesy to acknowledge the receipt of that letter. (Cries of "shame", "shame" from Government Benches.) (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: There are 4,000 letters pending. It is not yours alone.) Yes, I know that.

Sir, the Supply Department in order to make then policy a success require the highest honesty, integrity and efficiency. But we find and find very painfully that the task of actually executing this policy has been left to the probationers and junior Sub-Deputy Collectors. They are the District and Subdivisional Supply Officers. Sir, besides this, I have seen the District Magistrates and the Subdivisional Officers having no care, no anxiety for the fulfilment of the promises of the Hon'ble the Supply Minister. In my district during the Food Drive Government seized large stocks, seized them only because if these were left with the hoarders, they would have indulged in anti-social activities, but I am constrained to say that up till now those seized paddy are in hoard, and particularly during

these hard months when people are starving in the districts, the Subdivisional Officers and the Collectors of the Supply Department, everyone is sitting tight over these hoards and not starting free kitchens or opening cheap grain shops in spite of repeated appeals from the leaders and the masses. Sir, many of us here are not aware of what has happened there during the recent flood. Nearly 250 square miles of land are under water. More than 500 villages have become islands. Over 100 boats are plying over the Grand Trunk Road. We very much expected that in consideration of the tragedy the Hon'ble the Home Minister will move from his seat and visit those places and sympathise with the suffering people. Sir, I am definitely of the opinion that the policy of the Ministry however excellent, however nice, however efficient it may be, can never be executed in the way in which they would like it to be unless they move from district to district and meet the representatives of the masses. Sir, I may cite one instance. As soon as the flood came in, the Hon'ble Revenue Minister to whom we are all grateful went immediately to the spot along with the Communication Minister. The first thing that they did was to convene a meeting of all the representative organisations at the Burdwan Raj Palace and constituted a United Official and non-Official Relief Committee of which the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan is the President. This was sufficient for solving the flood problem there and I admit frankly with gratitude that so far as the flood is concerned, we have no grievance against the Government. If the Hon'ble the Supply Minister cares to visit district by district and in the same way calls meetings of the representatives of all sections and forms committees like the one stated before and gives instructions to the officials to follow them in co-operation with the representatives of the non-officials, I think within a very short time, if their policy is honestly executed, they will be saved from criticisms that they are receiving now.

Sir, I would like to draw your pointed attention to one more thing. During the Food Drive the Supply Department organised food committees in every union and village in Bengal. At that time they said that those food committees would not cease to function immediately after the Food Drive, but they shall continue to work until they will be developed as permanent Palli Mangal Samities. In order that a particular organisation may function properly and efficiently, they must command the confidence of the people and in order that they may command the confidence of the people, it is necessary that they must continue, but we are surprised to find that the Ministry by a recent circular has instructed the officials to organise the relief committees ignoring the food committees or at any rate putting them aside. That is what has happened in my district. What I saw practically in my district is this: the Subdivisional Officers and Collectors are ignoring these food committees completely and they are setting up new committees. If there is a multiple of committees no committee will ever command the confidence of the people. They will succeed in creating a sense of frustration in the minds of the people. I do not blame the Food Minister. I appreciate his difficulties, I appreciate his seriousness and I

appreciate his sincerity. I do not question his honesty, efficiency or integrity, but I would appeal to him to consider if he is, at this stage after having worked for so many months and having formulated a policy, in a position or not to move into the district and show his sympathies with us by his presence there and organising relief committees, if he thinks that these committees are necessary to strengthen the reorganisation of the food committees on a proper basis in consultation with the officials. He should ask the officials fully to co-operate with the non-officials. Unless this is done I think there is no chance whatsoever of their policy being executed in actual practice, and if this is not done, the situation will remain as it is and people will continue to starve and die. The average death roll in the Burdwan town—I have ascertained it from the head scavenger, because this is the correct source of information—is something like 20 to 25 every day. Sir, I may repeat once more for your information that the officers of the district, particularly the subordinate officers are simply behaving in a scandalous manner and joking with the starving people. I am aware of one instance where one subdivisional officer of Burdwan asked the people of a certain union to gather at a certain place on a particular day to give them free food. These people assembled there and found nothing. Similarly, another day was fixed and within a short time we found the people coming back hopelessly walking about 4 to 5 miles for food. They are thus making cruel jokes with the starving people. If the Ministry are serious, they must have full control over these subordinate officers and they should see that the subordinate officers do care to execute the policy that Government have enunciated. Otherwise the situation will remain as it is.

In conclusion I beg of the Hon'ble Supply Minister to leave Calcutta for some time and tour round the rural areas. The rural areas are being neglected. The city is being attended to. The towns and the districts are also to some extent attended to, but the rural areas are being thoroughly and fully and hopelessly ignored. The subdivisional officers do not move from their headquarters.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has made an inordinately lengthy speech on the present food situation in Bengal, and as usual, his speech contains much smoke but little fire. As usual, there is also much thunder against hoarders, stockists and traders. He has also, true to his wont, offered us a number of promises for the present and the future, just as he has done in the past. Meanwhile, the piteous wailings of the hungry millions are rending Bengal's sky and men, women and children are dying of starvation in thousands. The present Ministry has been in office for the last six months, and about their record in tackling the food situation during this period, the less said the better. They started with the theory that there was no shortage in Bengal and it was only the hoarders and profiteers who had brought about this terrible situation now prevailing in Bengal. But today Mr. Suhrawardy recants all what he said before and sings in a different tune. He has for the first time admitted that "the stocks are

neither considerable in the hands of consumers nor of the trade nor of the employers". For the edification of the uninitiated he has also recounted 11 factors that had brought about the present food situation in Bengal. But Mr. Suhrawardy has not said anything as to how he wants to solve the crisis. He has not placed before the House any concrete scheme for the solution of the present food crisis. Nor has he taken us into confidence as to what he wants to do in the rural as well as in urban areas. From all quarters, high and mighty, we are told that wagon loads of foodgrains are daily arriving in Bengal. But where are they going to? Although Mr. Suhrawardy has said that there are no great stocks in the hands of traders in general, but he has not told the House whether any big stock was either recovered or found with Messrs. Ispahani & Co. or with any other Government Agent.

There are still two months to go for the main rice crop, viz., *aman*, to come into the market. With all the resources to be made available to the province from outside together with the *aus* crop harvested and an estimated outturn of the *aman* crop, it is not absolutely impossible to attempt a solution of the problem in a rational manner. The problem is mainly one of organisation, distribution and control. If Bombay, which is dependent for its food supply on imported stuffs from outside, has succeeded in making a solution, as satisfactory as is possible under the present circumstances, there is no reason why Bengal should not be able to do so. As I have said in one of my press statements as early as July this year that if a satisfactory solution of the food problem is to be attempted, the needs of Calcutta and the industrial area and those of the rural areas should be considered separately. I also suggested on that occasion that as the responsibility for feeding Calcutta and the industrial area is one mainly concerning the Centre, the requirements of this zone should be met by imports from outside the province rather than by drawing on the already short supplies in the districts.

Even now I would suggest that the Government should base their policy on the recognition of that principle and act accordingly. The solution would be easier if a system of strict rationing is introduced in Calcutta and other municipal towns in Bengal. These areas should as far as possible be supplied with imported foodstuffs. So far as the rural areas are concerned the people might be told to help themselves with their resources as far as possible and where acute deficits manifest themselves, the Government should come to the rescue of those areas from supplies received from outside the province. In this connection, I consider it pertinent to point out that in the interest of an equitable and successful distribution of the available foodgrains, any scheme of rationing that might be embarked upon by the Government should operate through normal trade channels under Government control, direction and supervision, as has been successfully done in Bombay. Government should also set up an Advisory Committee of non-officials and representatives of Trade to act as a liaison between the Government, the trade and the public. This would also help in the generation of a feeling of confidence in the public mind.

Trade has always co-operated with the Government to the best of its ability. But it is unfortunate that apart from showing lip sympathy to it and holding occasional conferences, the Government have not so far shown any anxiety to seek its co-operation. Instead, trade has every reason to feel aggrieved on account of the manner in which its interests have from time to time been sacrified by the Government. I may also mention in this connection, that the trade has, with its vast organisation throughout the province, successfully performed the work of feeding the people in the past. But this entire organisation has now been dislocated by a Government machinery consisting of a few civilians having no knowledge of the circumstances, practices and experience of the trade and having no stake in the matter. The officials have mismanaged the whole thing, either with some purpose or because of whimsical actions taken by them. The result of their experiments with a vital matter like food supply has been simply disastrous. If the Ministry is serious about it, even now a solution can be found. But is it in a mood to do so? If it is, let it give the proof by its deeds, and not words.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I rise on a question of privilege? We, the members of this Legislature, are being inconvenienced for want of supply of petrol for our use for the days we have been attending this House. We have approached the Secretary in this connection and our registration books have duly been deposited along with necessary request. But still it appears that there is something in the office which is standing in the way. Sir, the office exists for the members and not the members for the office. Would you kindly see that necessary action is taken in the matter?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right, I shall see to that.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED: মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, এই পরিষদে আজকে বাংলার জনসাধারণের খাদ্য-সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা হচ্ছে। এই বাংলার জনসাধারণের খাদ্য-সমস্যা সুচারুরূপে সুসম্পন্ন না করতে পারার অজুহাতে গত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর বিরুদ্ধে অনেকগুলি অনাস্থাসূচক প্রস্তাব তৎকালীন বিরোধী দল থেকে উপস্থাপিত হয়েছিল এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত অকৃতকার্য্য হওয়ার পর তাদের মুরুব্বি বিদায়ী গভর্ণর Sir John Herbert সাহেব অনুকম্পা করে সেই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীকে বিদায় করে বর্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী গঠন করেছেন। যখন গত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী গদীতে ছিল, তখন এই বাংলাদেশে চাউলের দর দশ বার টাকা ছিল—ক্রমে পনের ষোলয় উঠেছিল। তখন বর্তমান মন্ত্রী ও তাহাদের সমর্থকরা চিৎকার করে উঠেছিল যে বাংলায় লোক মরে যাবে, না খেয়ে,—তারা চাউল কিনতে পারে না। আর এই প্রভুদের আমলে চাউলের দর চল্লিশ টাকায় উঠেছে, কোথাও বা পঞ্চাশ টাকায় উঠেছে। তখনও প্রভুদের মুখে দেখেছি হাসি, তাদের সমর্থকদের মুখে দেখেছি হাসি। আর পোকা মাকড়ের মত পথে ঘাটে—শুধু কলিকাতার সহরে নয়,—সর্বত্র পোকা মাকড়ের মত লোক না খেয়ে মরছে। আর তাদের এক ডজনের উপর মন্ত্রী, আর দেড় ডজন Parliamentary Secretary—আর তাদের সমর্থকরা হাসছে। যেমন ছেলেরা ফড়িং নিয়ে খেলে, তার পা ভাঙ্গে, পাখা ছিড়ে, মুণ্ড ছেদন করে, আর আনন্দে ছেলেরা

সকলে মিলে হাসে, তেমনিভাবে পোকা মাকড়ের মত বাংলার জনসাধারণের ছেলে মেয়ে মরে যাচ্ছে, আর ওরা ছেলেদের মত হাস্‌ছে। তাই দেখে কবির একটা কথা আমার মনে পড়ছে—

"হাস হাস হাস শিশু, নহে দিন দূর,
সংসার সাগর তীরে বসিয়ে যখন বিষাদ
তরঙ্গমালা গণিতে গণিতে কাল হইবে প্রক্ষুব্ধ মুখ,
বুঝিবে তখন নির্ম্মল শৈশব ক্রীড়া সুখের কেমন"।

আজ দেখছি—এই বাংলার দুর্দ্দশার কথা এখানে অতি গুরুতরভাবে আলোচনা হচ্ছে, আমাদের বিরোধী দল থেকে অনেকে সেই খাঁটি কথাগুলি বলেছেন—আর আমাদের মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এবং তাদের সমর্থকদের গায়ে মরিচের ঝালের মত লাগছে, আর মাঝে মাঝে তারা উস্‌কে উঠছেন। মোটা গলায় কেহ কেহ বক্তৃতা করে গিয়েছেন, কতকগুলি বাজে কথা বলেছেন, সত্য গোপন করবার চেষ্টা করেছেন, বা আরও করবেন। তাই আমার মনে পড়ে একটি কথা। "চোরের মায়ের মোটা গলা, আরও চায় দুধ কলা" (laughter)। তেমনি অবস্থা দেখ্‌ছি আজ বাংলার মন্ত্রিদলের। আমার বলবার কথা হচ্ছে এই যে বাংলাদেশে এত সব লোক খাদ্যাভাবে মরে যাচ্ছে, বহু লোক অনাহারে রয়েছে, আর আজকে এই যে বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী যারা গত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীকে নানা রকমে দোষী করে তাদের গদী দখল করবার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন এবং কৃতকার্য্যও হয়েছেন—আজকে তারা হাস্‌ছেন কোন লজ্জায়? তারা কি লজ্জা সরম একেবারে খেয়ে ফেলেছেন? মনুষ্যত্বের মাথায় পদাঘাত করেছেন? একটা প্রবাদ কথা আছে—ময়ূর যখন আনন্দে পেখম ধরে নৃত্য করতে করতে কিছুক্ষণ নৃত্য করার পর নিজের পায়ের দিকে দৃষ্টি করে, তখন তার গোদা পা দেখে তার নৃত্য ছেড়ে দিয়ে লজ্জায় মাথা নত করে। বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী ও তাদের সমর্থক দল এই যে আনন্দে নৃত্য করছেন—কেহ বা কেরোসিন তেলের দোকানের license পেয়েছেন—কেহ চিনি, চাউল, এটা, ওটার দোকান, চাকুরী, ইত্যাদি পেয়েছেন, নানা ভাবে পকেটের সুবিধা করে নিয়েছেন—আর আনন্দে নৃত্য করছেন। আর বাংলার জনসাধারণ—হাজার হাজার, লক্ষ লক্ষ লোক অনাহারে মরে যাচ্ছে, কোন প্রতিকার হয় নাই। তাদের সেই গোদা পায়ের দিকে একবার লক্ষ্য করুন। এই যে দুর্দ্দশা—তারা যার প্রতিকার করতে পারেন নাই—তারজন্য তাদের লজ্জায় মাথা নত করা উচিত। তারা লজ্জা সরমের মাথা খেয়ে আবার হাস্‌ছেন এবং আনন্দ করছেন। আর জনসাধারণের খাদ্য-সরবরাহ বিভাগের মন্ত্রী মহোদয়—তিনি একজন বাংলার মুস্লিম লীগের সেক্রেটারী, তিনি বাংলায় করছেন পাকিস্থান, যে পাকিস্থানে পাকিস্থানি মুসলমানদের বোঝা বাধার দরকার করে না। যা হোক, এসব সত্য কথা বলতে গেলে অনেকের কষ্ট হবে মনে। তাই বলছি যে "উচিত কথায় বন্ধু বেজার, গরম ভাতে বিড়াল বেজার"। যা হোক, এই বাংলাদেশে, এই পাকিস্থানের ভিতর, এই ইংরাজ রাজত্বের ভিতর, আজ লক্ষ লক্ষ মুসলমান না খেয়ে মরছে। তার কি প্রতিকার হচ্ছে, তার জবাবদিহি করতে হবে। এবং ভারতে ও বাংলাদেশে যারা ধান, চাল উৎপন্ন করে, যাদের পরিশ্রমে ক্ষেতে ধান, চাল, ডাল উৎপন্ন হয়, সেই ক্ষেত মজুরদের জন্য কি ব্যবস্থা হয়েছে? গভর্ণমেণ্ট করছেন—তাদের চাকুরিয়াদের জন্য, যারা হাজার হাজার, শত শত টাকা মাইনে পান, তাদের জন্য কম দরে চাল, ডাল পাওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করেছেন। আর ক্ষেত মজুর, যারা শরীরের রক্ত পানি করে ধান, চাল, ডাল উৎপন্ন করে, তারা যে অনাহারে মরছে, তাদের জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট কি ব্যবস্থা করছেন? তার কি একটা জবাবদিহি

করতে হবে না? নিশ্চয় করতে হবে। আমি বলে দিচ্ছি—এই অদূর ভবিষ্যতে সহরে থাকলে চলবে না। যেতে হবে সেখানে যেখানে একবার তারা এই গদীতে আসবার কিছু সময় পূর্বে পাড়ায় পাড়ায়, গ্রামে গ্রামে চোখের পানি ফেলেছেন। সেখানে চলুন। আবার সেই গ্রামে গ্রামে যান। গ্রামের অবস্থা দেখুন। আমার বিশ্বাস, পিঠের চামড়া আস্ত নিয়ে ফিরে আসতে পারবেন না।

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 5-55 p.m. till 9 a.m. on Saturday, the 18th September, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Saturday, the 18th September, 1943, at 9 a.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 175 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Articles allowed to be taken away by the security prisoners on release.

***43. Mr. JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state

(*i*) whether security prisoners on their release from jails are allowed to take with them only one *dhuti*, one shirt and a pair of shoes and the other articles are kept back from them by the Jail authorities;

(*ii*) whether the released security prisoners find that due to their detention, they have lost their former sources of income and that they will take some time to procure new sources of income by which they will be able to maintain themselves and their families; and

(*iii*) whether on all previous occasions of detention detenus were allowed to take with them all the articles they were using in the jails or camps?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is considering the desirability of permitting the released security prisoners to take with them all the articles given to them in their detention in jails?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

MINISTER in charge of HOME (JAILS) DEPARTMENT (Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): I have since issued orders whereby security prisoners are permitted to take with them, at the time of their release, all items of clothing and personal effects supplied by Government during the year prior to their release and all articles purchased by them during their detention partly or wholly with their own money.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Has this order been given effect to and, if so, when?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, very recently.

MR. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কি বলবেন যখন Security prisonerরা নূতন কাপড় জামা Governmentএর কাছে চায় তাদের পুরাণ জামা কাপড় ফিরিয়ে দিয়ে কি চাওয়া হয়?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, Sir

Crimes committed for want of food grains.

***44. Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, district by district, for the year 1942 up to June, 1943—

(*a*) the number of dacoities committed to obtain supplies of food grains;

(*b*) the number of food riots, and

(*c*) the number of suicides or deaths due to—

(*i*) starvation, and

(*ii*) acute economic distress?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): The information asked by the honourable member is such as will involve labour which is not commensurate with the utility achieved by statistics called for.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: May I know how Government assess the gravity of the famine situation in the absence of information as to the number of deaths due to starvation?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Here it is not only the question of famine but it is a question that was sent up some time back for statistics for the whole of the year 1942 and up to June, 1943, and it includes statistics of the number of dacoities, etc., committed and if information is to be supplied, that has to be called for from every district which will involve time and labour which will not be commensurate with its utility.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: May I know how Government assess the gravity of the famine situation in the absence of information asked for in question (*c*)—the number of deaths due to starvation?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: So far as information regarding (*c*) is concerned, Government get it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Has Government discontinued the practice of collecting reports from districts, from police offices for the purpose of having the Annual Administrative Report of the Police Department published which shows classified the number of dacoities committed and the number of riots committed in each district and in each area as also the number of deaths from suicide and starvation?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The present Government has not discontinued it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is not possible to find out from that administrative report statistics which are collected normally to answer these questions and if so why was it not possible for the present Government to collect figures on that basis?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: These figures will come after the year is completed. Apart from that fact, Government get consolidated reports and it will involve a lot of time and labour to look into the details of dacoities and deaths.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is a fact that fortnightly reports of district administrations are submitted to Government and from the summary of that report it is possible to ascertain the reasons for any crimes in the respective areas as well? Has the present Government exonerated the District Officers from submitting such fortnightly reports?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: These reports are only summary reports and no detail is given. Here the honourable member wants the number of dacoities committed to obtain supply of foodgrains. That means that Government will have to go into the details of reports which will involve a lot of time and labour.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will Government be pleased to state if either the Parliamentary Secretary concerned or the Minister in charge has ever had occasion to go through some of the fortnightly reports which do give the abstract reasons for crimes in each area?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: This is only a summary report.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The question also wants a summary and nothing more.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: It wants details—numbers of deaths, riots and dacoities.

Proposal regarding removal of Dacca University elsewhere.

***45. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is in the contemplation of Government to remove the University of Dacca elsewhere outside Eastern Bengal?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of giving up the proposal of removing the University from Dacca?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) No.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Admission and treatment of security prisoners in the Medical College.

*46. **Mr. KAMAL KRISHNA ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that—

(*i*) the security prisoners who are sent to the Calcutta Medical College Hospital for treatment are admitted into Dr. Ghosh's Ward in surgical cases and in Dr. Wahed's Ward in medical cases; and

(*ii*) no choice is left to them for selection of their Surgeon or Physician?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason why the security prisoners are not allowed to have their own selection of their Surgeon or Physician?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of enquiring into the matter and removing the restriction, if any?

(*d*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that diets prescribed by the Surgeon or Physician of the Medical College Hospital are curtailed and controlled by some person other than the prescribing Surgeons or Physicians?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of making necessary enquiries into the matter?

(*f*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of taking steps that the patients are not deprived of diets prescribed by their doctors?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any supervision made by a competent medical man of the cooked and other diets regarding their quality before being served to patients?

(*h*) If the answer to (*g*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of taking steps so as to ensure a proper supervision by a medical man of the diets of patients before being served to them?

MINISTER in charge of PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (Khan Sahib Hamiduddin Ahmad on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) (*i*) Security prisoners who are sent to the Medical College Hospitals, Calcutta, for treatment are admitted into the wards of the Additional Surgeon and the Additional Physician of the hospital. Those who are suffering from diseases of the eye, ear, nose or throat, etc., are admitted into the wards of the specialists in such diseases. In future security prisoners will be admitted in the wards of the heads of departments of the institution, viz., the Professor of Medicine, Professor of Surgery, Professor of Midwifery and Professor of Ophthalmic Surgery.

(*ii*), (*b*) and (*c*) Patients in the general wards have to be admitted under the Surgeons or Physicians according to the admission roster and for obvious reasons they cannot be given any choice.

(*d*), (*e*) and (*f*) Diets for patients have to be prescribed within the limit sanctioned by Government, viz., 12 annas per head per diem. When the diet prescribed by a Surgeon or Physician exceeds the sanctioned limit, it has to be curtailed by the Superintendent of the hospital. The prescribed diet is, however, never curtailed by the Superintendent so long as it does not exceed the sanctioned limit. This applies also to the paying patients of the hospital.

(*g*) and (*h*) Diets are supervised by the medical officers in charge. They are also frequently examined by the Superintendent of the hospital.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long the sanctioned amount, i.e., 12 annas per head per diem, is existing?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The revised order was passed by Government on the 26th November, 1942.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Does Government consider the desirability of increasing the rate in view of the abnormal rise in prices of staple foodgrains?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: If there is any complaint, Government will certainly consider it.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: In view of the fact that the complaint is there will the Government be pleased to consider it?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: As I have already said, Government will certainly consider it, if complaint is there.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In answer to (*d*),(*e*) and (*f*) it is stated "When the diet prescribed by a surgeon or physician exceeds the sanctioned limit, it has to be curtailed by the Superintendent of the hospital". In view of the fact, therefore, that the surgeons and physicians are fully competent to prescribe what of diet is to be given to a patient, do the Government contemplate issuing directions that the Superintendent should not interfere and the diet prescribed by the surgeons and physicians should be adhered to?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Patients are not deprived of the diet so long as it is within the sanctioned limit. If the doctors prescribe a diet which exceeds the limit, then it has to be cut down. This is applicable in the case of all the patients. If control over finance is withdrawn, the Accountant-General, Bengal, will refuse to pass the diet bill.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Government be pleased to state if the security prisoners whose diet allowance amounts to Rs. 1-8 per diem have got to suffer a reduction in their diet allowance when they are ill?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Government cannot make a special case when they enter into the hospitals, but if any extra amount is paid by the jail authorities, Government will have no objection.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Government consider the desirability of rataining the minimum sanctioned diet allowance for security prisoners whether they are in jail or in the hospital, as going to the hospital is not the choice of the patient but it is a necessity of circumstances?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The security prisoner patients cannot be given any preferential treatment over the others. If they are paid anything over and above the limit, the jails concerned should arrange to supply.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Do the Government think it desirable to communicate to the jail authorities for retaining the diet allowance prescribed by the Jail Department when any security prisoner will be in the Medical College or any other hospitals?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDIN AHMAD: This department is concerned only with diet in the hospital If any security prisoner needs anything more, he may move the Home Department and the Jail Department

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Government be pleased to state what arrangements have been made by the Medical and Public Health Department to see that the privileges and necessities of life provided for the security prisoners in the jail are not reduced when they are placed in charge of the Medical Department?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I have already said that security prisoners are not given any special preference.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My question is what arrangements the Medical Department have made

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: No special arrangement has been made.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Scandalous. You ought to be ashamed!

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Is the Government aware of the fact that in the jail hospitals when the security prisoners are admitted no limit is prescribed?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Minister in charge or the Government be pleased to state when the security prisoners are in the Medical College Hospitals, do they come under the control of the Medical Department or still continue to remain under the control of the Home Department or Jail Department?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: With regard to treatment and diet allowance in the hospital, they are fully under the control of the Medical Department.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Government be pleased to state if their interviews and their attendance are guided by the Medical Department rules or by the Home Department rules? If not, why distinction is made and special case is made for these prisoners even when they are in the hospital?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I have already answered that it is not the Medical Department which control security prisoner patients.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The member in charge has said that no discrimination can be made in the hospital. I ask him if any discrimination in other respects other than the diet allowance is made?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Government consider the desirability of permitting the security prisoners who are patients to spend money out of their own pocket over their diet while they are under treatment?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Provided the doctors in charge approve it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of the meagreness of this diet allowance of annas 12 per diem under the present emergency will the Government be pleased to state if they will consider generally increased provision for diet allowance for all patients in the Medical College and other hospitals?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: It will be considered by Government.

Index of cost of living.

*47. **Mr. SIBNATH BANERJEE:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department of Commerce, Labour and Industries be pleased to state what steps are being taken to find out accurate cost of living index figures?

MINISTER in charge of the DEPARTMENT of COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES (Mr. Syed Abdul Majid on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. K. Shahabuddin): The matter is under consideration. For the present a family budget enquiry in respect of indusrial workers undertaken by the Labour Commissioner is in progress, on which it is hoped to base an accurate cost of living index for Howrah.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer "the matter is under consideration", will the Government be pleased to state how long this is under consideration and whether it is a fact that in the "Calcutta Gazette" from time to time the index of cost of living is published?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Will you kindly put your question separately?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: It does not enter your brain! The first part of my question is how long this matter of statistics of cost of living index is under the consideration of Government; and the second part of it is whether it is a fact that the Commerce Department of the Bengal Government does actually publish in the "Calcutta Gazette" from time to time the cost of living index.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: As to how long it will take I cannot say. As regards the other thing I refer the honourable member to the gazette.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Will the Government be pleased to state if the result of the enquiry in respect of industrial workers in Howrah will be sufficient to estimate the cost of living index for other industrial workers?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Yes, I think so.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the Civil Supplies Department of Government is supplying to other departments of Government as well as to "Calcutta Gazette" for publication during the last few weeks statistics of cost of living index, and the last one shows that the cost of living has gone up by nearly 300 per cent on the controlled rate?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: If the honourable member knows it I need not answer the question

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the honourable member be pleased to explain how the official cost of living index published in the Gazette is compiled?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: I want notice.

Number of strikes and trade disputes in jute mills of Bengal.

***48. Mr. A. M. A. Zaman:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, year by year, since September, 1939 to June, 1943—

(*a*) the number of strikes and trade disputes in different jute mills of Bengal;

(*b*) the number of workers affected by the same in each case;

(*c*) the cause that led to the strikes and disputes; and

(*d*) the steps, if any, the Government have taken so far to meet the grievances of the jute workers?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. K. Shahabuddin): (*a*) There were 117 disputes in different jute mills in Bengal from September, 1939 to June, 1943, *i.e.*, 26 in 1939, 16 in 1940, 14 in 1941, 38 in 1942, and 23 in 1943 (up to June).

(*b*) It is difficult to compile figures, year by year, and will take time.

(*c*) The causes that led to the strikes in most of the cases were demands for increase in wages, dearness allowance, etc., and in recent cases of strikes, demand for the increased quota of food grains at cheap rates and supply of ration have been the main causes.

(*d*) Government and Labour Commissioner have advised employers and Indian Jute Mills Association from time to time as deemed necessary and various concessions have been granted between September, 1939 and June, 1943.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: With reference to answer (*d*), will the honourable member be pleased to state in what way the advice of the Government was communicated to employers and the Jute Mills' Association?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: By way of correspondence, and letters.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: Was it a general circular?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: No, not a general circular.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Will the honourable member be pleased to state if in settling disputes they are following the advice of the Government?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: I want notice.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: Will the honourable member be pleased to state some of the various concessions granted to the labourers due to strikes?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Yes concessions by way of dearness allowance and supply of foodgrains at cheap rates were granted.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: What was the rate of dearness allowance granted to the labourers?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: I want notice.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: Will the honourable member be pleased to state whether any person was victimized as a result of these strikes?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: None so far as I know.

Report of the Enquiry Committee regarding breach in the Damodar River Embankment.

***49. Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state whether the Committee appointed by Government on 6th August, 1943, to enquire into the causes of the breach in the left embankment of the Damodar River on 17th July, 1943, has submitted its report?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what are the causes of the breach; and

(*ii*) what steps Government propose to take to prevent further breaches in the embankment of the Damodar?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prasanna Pain): (*a*) No.

(*b*) (*i*) The Committee is investigating about the causes.

(*ii*) Government has appointed a committee consisting of—

(1) the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan (*Chairman*),

(2) Dr. Meghnath Shaha, F.R.S.,

(3) a representative to be nominated by the Bihar Government,

(4) the Chief Engineer, Bengal, Department of Communications and Works (Irrigation),

(5) the Chief Engineer, East Indian Railway,

(6) the Chief River Surveyor to the Port Commissioners, Calcutta,

(7) Rai Bahadur Kanwar Sain, I.S.E., Executive Engineer of the Punjab Government,

(8) Mr. S. J. Curtis, Conservator of Forests, Southern Circle, and

(9) Dr. N. K. Bose, Director of River Research Institute, Bengal (*Secretary*).

to advise on the steps to be taken to prevent breaches and, if possible, floods in the Damodar

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that one of the main causes of the breaches in the Damodar Embankment is denudation in the Chota Nagpur hills?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: Indirectly, yes.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the question of afforestation of these denuded catchment areas is being taken up with the Bihar Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: That is one of the matters which this committee will investigate

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when this committee has been appointed and what time has been given to them to complete their work and submit their report?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: The committee was appointed last week and we are still awaiting the reply from the Government of Bihar about their representative

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister give us the full terms of reference of that committee and state whether in particular this committee is in a position to enter into the big question of having suitable reservoir constructed in the upper basin of the river as recommended by Mr. Glass?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: They have been asked specially to consider the Glass report

MR. CHARU CHANDRA ROY : মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কি অবগত আছেন যে ডাঃ মেঘনাথ সাহা সম্প্রতি কাগজে, সংবাদ পত্রে কতকগুলি suggestion দিয়েছেন ? তিনি বলবেন কি সেই suggestion গুলি তিনি consider করছেন কি ?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: Dr. Megnad Saha saw me twice and I had a full discussion with him.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any other enquiry was set up by the Government of Bengal before this committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: No committee was set up before.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any action is being taken now pending the report of this committee of enquiry and what action, if at all, is being contemplated or taken or sanctioned?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: The action which has been taken is to close the breach and to construct a second bund.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that contrary to the advice tendered by the Chief Engineer of the Irrigation Department of Government of Bengal a 20 mile long embankment with a second protective embankment on that is being pursued by the present Government and that this work is entrusted to another Superintending Engineer to be completed?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: The answer to the honourable member's first question is no. As regards the second question Mr. Russel, Superintending Engineer, has been put on special duty.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What special duty is Mr. Russel required to do? Is it not a fact that two embankments one after the other have been contemplated and that a 20-mile long embankment to protect future breaches has been now under examination and is also pursued by Mr. Russel?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: As I have said we shall have to close the breach first and then take up the 20-mile long retired line.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that between the retired line and the breach of the embankment there would be a gap and that the experts think that the presence of such a gap in between will never enable any onrush of water to be protected by the second embankment and that the money is thoroughly wasted?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: The honourable member may think so, but the experts hold that if the second line is kept wet there, it will be sufficiently protective.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Has the expert been consulted as to what quantity of water will be required between the two embankments to keep the second embankment sufficiently wet so that any sudden onrush of water will be absorbed by that volume of water between the two embankments?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: That point is being considered.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the expert who was supposed to have recommended this embankment failed to give any assurance to Government that in case the normal flood of more than 3½ lakhs of cusecs of water in the Damodar river comes it will not be possible for him to assure any protection by this embankment?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: It is not a fact.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in this connection what is the report of the Expert Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already given you a reply in that connection.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who is the expert consulted by Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: A committee of experts considered this matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Who are the members of this committee?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: The Chief Engineer, East Indian Railway, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department and the Chief Engineer, Bengal and Assam Railway, and others.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the report of the Chief Engineer, Irrigation, Bengal?

Mr. SPEAKER: That cannot be given here.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the opinion given by the Chief Engineer, Bengal Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: His opinion is the same as that of the other experts.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: With reference to the members mentioned in (7), (8) and (9), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether they are on the committee in their personal capacity?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: I cannot follow the question.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Are the members mentioned in (7), (8) and (9) of the question working as *ex-officio* members or are they on the committee in their personal capacity? Are they considered to be experts in irrigation matters?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: The committee was appointed in view of the fact that they will best be able to advise Government.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the answer that the opinion of the Chief Engineer, Irrigation, is the same as the opinion of the experts, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the opinion of the experts which is not available?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PRASANNA PAIN: Their opinion is that the breach be closed and the second line be constructed.

Rural Reconstruction in Rajshahi.

***50. Mr. MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture (Rural Reconstruction) Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the amount proposed to be spent under this head in the current year;

(*b*) how the amount is distributed in each district;

(*c*) which kind of reconstruction work Government propose to take up in the Rajshahi district;

(*d*) whether economic improvement of rural people is included in the programme of rural reconstruction; and

(*e*) if so, how the Government propose to help the people for their economic improvement?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE (RURAL RECONSTRUCTION) DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain): The honourable member is referred to the reply given to clauses (*a*) and (*b*) of the starred question No. 19 on 6th July, 1943.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any scheme of rural reconstruction has been formulated and is proposed to be taken up by Government for the district of Rajshahi?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: No Owing to the present emergency the main scheme of rural reconstruction including the scheme of adult education has been held in abeyance for the duration of war and the department has been allowed only to carry on.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.

Mr. P. BANERJI: Sir, the budget presented by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister is again a dismal budget. In ordinary circumstances one would feel inclined to indulge in speaking on different items of the budget, but in the present circumstances the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has put in so many items in the budget that it appears that he as well as everybody else is living in an atmosphere of unreality.

Sir, ever since I had entered the Legislature I have noticed even from the time when there was a windfall of 3½ crores from the different charges, there was rejoicing in the Government side that more money would be spent

for the nation-building departments. When the present Finance Minister introduced the budget the other day, he was heard to state, when questioned whether this additional income from taxation in agriculture would be spent entirely for the improvement of agriculture in this country, that nothing was possible under the circumstances. Then, Sir, might I suggest that the only reasonable thing in the circumstances would have been one item of revenue income and one item of expenditure only? It has been said in the course of another debate that it is Government's responsibility to feed the people. In free countries if there is any reduction of doles, even women would enter into the Parliament and ask the Ministers and others to clear out, saying that they were unfit to sit on those chairs. But, Sir, here people are dying in hundreds of starvation, but still Government would only desire to spend more and more money on other different items. From the statement that has been given by the Hon'ble Minister it appears that the increase in expenditure will amount to little over 9 crores, particularly the main items of expenditure will cover charges for Famine, Agriculture, Civil Works, Police, General Administration, Irrigation, etc. May we know if all these expenditure cannot and should not be stopped at the present moment except expenditure for famine relief only.

If we analyse the various items of expenditure we notice that all major schemes, as for instance in the Agriculture and Irrigation Departments, have been suspended But why then there should be so much increase? In Industries there is no scheme, no comprehensive scheme: things are going on in a happy-go-lucky fashion. Every one knows how lakhs of rupees in that department are being wasted without any consequent gain. So if we take item by item you will see that Medical and Public Health Departments are not properly functioning, there is a lot of grievances against them: so long beds in hospitals were kept empty, but only recently people dying in the countryside are being removed to hospitals.

So far as Education is concerned, there is no new scheme and the unfortunate teachers are not given adequate relief in the countryside due to no fault of theirs.

Then, Sir, coming to Co-operation, I see that that department is carrying on absolute non-co-operation.

As regards Jails, while we know that British jails are places of correction, the jails here are places of corruption. The police exist not for detecting crimes but for increasing the crimes, and today the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department could not give us the data or rather he was afraid to give us the data for the simple reason that crimes in the country are increasing and appallingly increasing.

There is one item, Sir, and that is above all other items, namely, the Extraordinary Charges. Under this head there is a provision of 3 crores and 66 lakhs of rupees. We know that from 80 lakhs in 1942-43 the charges under this head have come to Rs. 5 crores and 48 lakhs under the present budget estimate. May we know what is the consideration for this heavy increase? If they say that this increase is due to war measures, is it not in the fitness of things that they should borrow money from the

Government of India instead of taxing the poor people here, because it i the Government of India who are responsible for these war measures an the expenditure incurred in connection therewith? So I say, Sir, that i is in the fitness of things that the Government of Bengal should approacl the Government of India for finding money to meet the situation that ha arisen in Bengal as a result of their war measures. Sir, when we sai that this Government was heading towards a crisis, they did not at tha time listen to us, and the result was inevitable to happen, and they hav created a situation which they now find very difficult to solve in spite o the best efforts of the Food Member of the Government of India. There fore I must say that instead of spending money in any other direction, th only course left would be, as Sir Jawla Prasad Srivastava has said, fror whatever source, to bring money; honestly, dishonestly, by stealing q robbing or borrowing, howsoever possible you must bring money and tha money you must spend in one direction and one direction alone, and tha is to save the people of the country from starvation and from death. Tha is the only point I should like to emphasise, because it is the Government' responsibility. Just as a father is responsible for the child so also th Government is responsible for the protection of the people, particularl when people are dying of starvation. It does not lie in the mouth of th British administration, which is responsible for this state of things, to sa that there is no famine here because official reports do not corroborate it But may I tell the House one instance which will show that official report are as is wanted by the authorities and not independent. In 1914, a than officer in my constituency who recently joined the service, reported tha there was a famine. But Government would not declare famine becaus there could not be any famine under British administration, so they woul want their officers to write that sort of report. On paper everything mus be all right. That officer foolishly and seriously wrote in his daily repor that there were some people who were eating leaves and that he paid Rs. 3-4 and purchased rice and other things and helped them. That was reported an when that diary came to the officer in charge, the Superintendent of Police Alipore, he was surprised. He called for an explanation why he shoul not be dismissed. That young man said, "I have done my duty. Wh should I be dismissed?" The Deputy Superintendent was an Indian. H said to the young man: "You are a young man fresh from college. Yo are giving up this job, then your father, wife and children will starve Therefore you need not say anything. You will only come with me to th Superintendent of Police". He went there at the request of his friend and the Deputy Superintendent explained everything. He said: "He i a young man fresh from college and he has just joined the Police service He does not know the intricacies of the department. Therefore, he ha done this. He is now sorry for it." The Superintendent said nothin but went out of the room. He was satisfied and the case was for the tim being hushed up. I can multiply instances of this nature. In 1917 acut distress prevailed in Madaripur and people were dying. A member of th Government who went there said: "There are leaves in the trees. Ho can there be famine?"

Sir, the exact state of thing is that our countrymen are God-fearing and peace-loving. That is the advantage of the bureaucratic Government in this country. If you read the history and see the causes of the French Revolution, you will find that when people were dying there, they approached a Minister of the French Government. He said sarcastically that there was sufficient green grass in the field. They retaliated and at once caught hold of the tie of the Minister and put grass into his mouth till he was suffocated. But, Sir, in this land people would not retaliate and, as I have said, they are peace-loving and God-fearing. That is the advantage.

Sir, there is no time, but I cannot finish without congratulating my friend—I do not find him here—Mr. Abul Hashim from Burdwan who spoke very candidly yesterday and it should be an eye-opener to the Government because he is a supporter of Government and of all persons he has brought the actual state of things in the countryside to the notice of Government. He spoke of Burdwan and other members on this side can similarly speak of other districts. I can speak of several districts.

Sir, Government has found money for arming the police in certain departments particularly for price control. The result has been that only on Saturday last at Daulatpur *hat* the thana officer with a posse of constables made his appearance at 6 o'clock. There people were selling paddy at Rs. 16 and rice at Rs. 32. He at once promulgated the order that paddy must be sold at Rs. 12-8 and rice at Rs. 25. The result was that people became panicky and those who could flee, fled away with everything and those who could not flee were compelled to sell at those prices, although it was wellknown that the poor cultivators and the poor traders, having purchased rice at Rs. 30 or Rs. 32, could not possibly sell it without notice at Rs. 25 without incurring heavy loss. As a result of this, people, particularly the poor people, had to go without rice. Day before yesterday a similar news has come from Khulna that in spite of the fact that there is one thousand maunds of rice and paddy in the custody of Government, people are not getting anything and they are starving. That is also the state of things in my constituency at Diamond Harbour.

Sir, it has been pointed out by my friend Mr. Abul Hashim that bribery and corruption are rampant. There are people who have made tons of money and they do not care if they can sell their goods in the black market. There was some controversy about the price of mustard oil which was selling at controlled rate. Neither Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee nor the Hon'ble Minister knew the rate actually prevailing in the market. Although the rate was fixed at Rs. 40, it was actually selling at Rs. 60. That is the actual state of affairs. Government should take courage and they should concentrate their energies on one item only, viz., to feed the people.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if the Chief Whip of the party led by Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose seeks the indulgence

of this House for a few minutes, it is not because he expects to make any helpful contribution to the solution of the staggering situation of the province today but because he wants to make a few humble observations in general. Sir, I thought that I would take some more time to recover my shattered health before I could take active part in the proceedings of the House, but I persuaded myself to think that if I can yet help myself upon a stick, this province cannot help itself even with a beggar's bowl.

Sir, I have read the carefully written statement of my very dear friend the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami and there are things which are there and there are things which are not there which call for some sort of discussion and solution. Sir, the body politic of this province is totally afflicted today by two clear-cut maladies. One is the food situation. I won't call it a problem because it is no longer a problem. It is a situation deepening and darkening hour after hour. And the other question is of political prisoners, particularly the security prisoners.

Sir, to me it appears that the more we indulge in helpless discussion of this stupendous food problem, the more we are adding insult to injury. We are hearing of food drives and food drives and that leads only to one thing, viz., that food is being hourly driven out. Very illuminating suggestions, learned proposals, carefully laid out plans have been laid before the public and before this House, but still they do not lead to anywhere. Why? Because there must be something rotten somewhere. It is not for me merely to blame the present Government on account of this situation nor is it for me to eulogise the past Ministry. But there is one thing to which I draw the particular attention of the Hon'ble Minister, namely, that the permanent services who are either the servants or the masters of any Government that comes into power—those permanent services are thoroughly steeped in corruption and dishonesty and there must be an end of that before we can meet with some solution. Sir, there are the permanent executives who are the naked rulers of the province, and in connection with this food problem they are guilty of negligence, they are guilty of apathy, they are guilty of connivance, they are guilty of dishonesty and they are entirely guilty of active dishonesty and corruption themselves. May I in all humility ask my friends of the Cabinet what they are going to do with regard to this question? I am not advancing any academic arguments, because I do not believe in any such. Ever since I came out of my forced detention I have been in touch with the food problem and with the solutions that have been tried in my district of Murshidabad. There I am voicing not only the feelings and sentiments of one party of the Legislature: I am voicing the feelings and sentiments even of the members of the Government party and the outside world. People are gradually becoming helpless not only on account of this problem but also on account of aggravated problems due to the deliberate and unchecked dishonesty of the executives who are in charge of the Food Department. My friend Mr. Farhad Reza Chaudhury of the Government party is just in front of me and I am glad that he is encouraging me. It is not a question of party politics; it is not a question of party slogan or party

propaganda; it is a question of *dal-bhat* pure and simple which has now reduced itself to bare gruel and nothing better than bare gruel. Sir, in my district, I am speaking on authority, based on personal knowledge and information which I investigated myself, the head of the administration—I will not accuse him more than by saying that he is unable to check the corruption in the Supply Department,—and the bellies and tails of the department are guilty of actually depriving the poor people of their paddy which is so much needed. Go to the market; you won't get anything. Go to the Civil Supplies Department; you won't get anything by mere demand. But if you can smuggle something into the pockets of those who are in charge of the administration you will get something. (Cries of "shame, shame" from the Opposition benches.) Dishonest merchants who have got their life's chance today—they are being patronised, they are being encouraged, they are being assisted in their dishonesty by the executive officers. Why? The reason is clear, because the executive officers are taking a share of the dishonest profits of the merchants. (Cries of "shame, shame" from the Opposition benches), and what is worse, the attention of the administrative heads is being drawn to these things, but the administrative heads are absolutely callous, either because they are unable to check the corruption or because they are also directly or indirectly saturated with the seeds and profits of this corruption. Will that continue? It is not an academic question; it is not a political question; it is not a propaganda question. It is a question which is, I believe, agitating the heads of the Ministry day in and day out But how can the Ministry solve even a fraction of the problem in the province if their officers at the base are given this charter of freedom and licence to loot paddy and rice from the mouth of the people who are really becoming beggars? It is a very serious question and no scheme, no plan, no comprehensive legislation or any such thing will be of any avail until and unless Government succeeds in checking the corruption. Attempts should be made to create an impression into the minds of the executives that they are now the worst needed servants of the people and they must check their own ambition of profiteering to some extent. Sir, I also put it to the Hon'ble Minister what is the situation today. Is the Ministry really not capable of dealing with the situation? Today, Sir, this province, this golden province of Bengal—a province which used to feed other provinces in times of distress—that province has been reduced to the position of a beggar with a bowl before other provinces. We have got to send our orphans to the Punjab, we have got to send our distressed people to other provinces, we have got to look across the frontiers of this province to other provinces, so that something might come to the relief of our people. Is it a matter which is encouraging? Is it not a matter which disgraces the whole past culture and tradition of this province? If it is so, there must be an absolute clarity of vision. Government must come out and must admit that the situation is beyond their hands. Non-official bodies today are certainly doing much more than the officials and Government as such. There should not be any hesitation on the part of Government to admit this state of things. Government servants go and supervise relief and their travelling allowance increases,

What a tragedy? People are starving, they are steeped in distress. Non-officials are spending from their own pockets to organise relief and do this and do that, whereas Government servants of this department simply go and supervise relief, have a talk with the President of a union board, another talk with the chairman of a municipality and every hour that they travel their travelling allowance increases. So, the Government servants, the servants of the people, are thriving on the distress of the people, and in proportion to the increase of distress on the one hand, their purses, on the other hand, are also multiplied. Is it not a real tragedy? I would suggest that the Ministry should clearly come out and make a confession of their inability to deal with this situation single-handed and unaided by non-official associations. There should be a clear understanding between the officials and non-officials, so that at least a fraction of the distress might be to some extent alleviated.

Sir, then comes the question of political prisoners. I submit, Sir, that I do not understand why the pace of release has gradually slowed down instead of increasing. Sir, when this Ministry came into power, there were encouraging assurances from them and to some extent those assurances were implemented for some time. Somehow—I do not want to conceal the fact—they were helpful in getting the release of certain persons in this province—even the release of persons regarding whom the attitude of the Home Department was very stiff and adamant. But at that time they dealt with the matter sincerely and they were able to get the fruits of their sincerity and their industry but why the good beginning that was made is fizzling out today I cannot comprehend. What is the situation today? Sir, releases began even from the time of the past Government in February. Releases were made in February, March, June, July and August. Sir, has anything happened in the meantime after these releases and because of these releases which has discouraged the Ministry in the matter of further release. When in the year 1942, there were the August disturbances, there was some excitement in the province and they had some justification for putting people under detention, but even upon the admission of the British bureaucracy, even upon the admission of big British statesmen in this country and outside, the situation has improved. If the situation has improved, what is the reason for being unable to accelerate the release of these prisoners?

Sir, nothing has happened in the meantime which will not justify the Ministers taking a strong attitude. The other day I was not here. The Hon'ble Home Minister—I read from the paper—made a reference to a certain person coming to Bengal and going out of Bengal as if that should be an excuse for not releasing the prisoners. I beg to differ from him. If a particular undesirable man came to the province, was it the fault of the prisoners who are in jail? If that particular man could not be arrested in time, was it the responsibility of the political prisoners who are in jail? What have the political prisoners to do with the situation that is happening outside the jail? I submit that it is no use creating a new issue. Today the position is such that all the security prisoners can be released and if

there is any theoretical difficulty in the way of accepting a general amnesty as a proposition, I don't see that there is any practical difficulty in accelerating the release of prisoners, and in the course of a fortnight's time all these prisoners can be released without any adverse reaction on the interests or safety of the province. I myself have been in detention and I have mixed with a lot of people who are still in jail. I emphatically assert that more than 90 per cent. of these detentions have been unnecessary and are unjustified. I submit that the Hon'ble Minister in charge ought to consider this matter very seriously for it will ultimately react for their benefit. After all the Ministry cannot exist by its strength of votes. The Ministry will have to exist with the moral support of the people. Some of our friends who have got a political past, some of our friends who have really inspired the political ambition, are in the Cabinet. I know that they are in the Cabinet with only one object in their mind, namely, that something should be done for the political prisoners. I ask them in all humility to release the political prisoners. In the past there have been releases of prisoners under worse circumstances. Why not in the present situation capture the imagination of the people at large by releasing these people who are detained? In this particular food situation, the economic distress of the province today calls for the services of such people. After all, much of the alleviation of the suffering will depend upon the organisation work that is done in the province. Most of these young men in jail have been known to be organisers of relief on a grand scale in the past. That is a man-power that has got to be released forthwith. If this tremendous man-power is released, it will be available for the organisation work in connection with distress and relief that will ultimately result in benefit to the province at large. I find in the House and outside there is a clash of political ideologies, between party and party, between creed and creed and between slogan and slogan and the time has come when it is necessary to take stock of the circumstances that existed in the past and take a vision of the future. However engrossing the present is, our future is far more important. We from all sides of the House should bring down the edifice which separates brother from brother and we must march forward together with our eye to the future. Sir, today the leader of Bengal is interned in the solitary cell of Marcara. Out of this distress, we must discover a leadership which will bring about an adjustment between the conflicts of parties, a leadership which will lead to the betterment of the people of Bengal and which will certainly help in finding a solution for the dire distress that is raging.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget presented now is best described as a Famine Budget. It shows a deficit of Rs. 7,36 lakhs. The revenue stands at the record figure of Rs. 18,44 lakhs and expenditure at Rs. 25,80 lakhs. Bengal today is faced all round with famine conditions as was predicted by some of the speakers in this House during the last session. Here in Calcutta, the 2nd city in the Empire, we witness appalling sights, hundreds dying in the streets and hospitals of starvation. Human beings are found picking up foodstuff from dustbins, a state of

affairs which has greatly shocked British and American soldiers stationed here. The one and only cry of these poor sufferers is to give them their daily bread; an appeal made to mothers "Oh, mago kaba dau" is most pathetic. The awful plight of the poor in the villages and districts is better imagined than described, for they do not have the rich to provide them with alms and relief kitchens. Calcutta is at present the city of beggars who being homeless have converted the open streets into latrines. Sir, in my opinion all this misery appears to have been brought about by a selfish coterie demanding self-government for the benefit of a communal majority. The coterie has consequently misguided and dominated the majority by offering them a fool's paradise. (Laughter.) They have failed to recognise merit; they have failed to listen to reason. They have ruthlessly set to work according to prearranged plans to bring about internal strife and disorder, knowing full well that a house divided against itself must fall. The result has been that the Empire has been involved in a Great War. Burma and our Far Eastern possessions have been lost and in the words of the Hon'ble Mr. T. C. Goswami, Finance Minister, Bengal is bent double with woe and agony. The Fazlul Huq Ministry being declared a failure by the Press and the Public, it was removed by the Governor. Today there is a tremendous upheaval in the country against the present Ministry. (Hear, hear, from the Opposition.) The magnitude of the deficit in our budget (Rs. 7,36 lakhs) points to the colossal blunder made by the Ministry in not controlling the price of rice when it gave the monopoly to a certain firm to purchase rice on behalf of the Government. It seems the height of folly to place such a large order in a rising market without a limit. (Hear, hear.) What was the motive? Surely not to bankrupt Bengal! And today when there is no rice in the market prices are controlled! Could matters be more absurd and ridiculous? Where has this Ministry financially led us to? Should we honestly entrust them with next year's expenditure? These are points we should seriously consider for the good of the people. We have our duty to perform and there is nothing more sacred than one's duty. It is an acknowledged fact that neither the previous nor the present Ministry could remain in office without the support of the 3rd party, that is the British element in the House, the party the Muslim and Hindu leaders refused to co-operate with and form an united Cabinet. Why? Simply because they wished to serve their own selfish ends and therefore aimed to exclude the powerful minority. If racial hatred is shown towards the Europeans and yet their assistance is sought only to retain power and to destroy each other, I seriously ask you if the 3rd party is not justified in leading such leaders up the garden path and dropping them when it is good for all concerned. The leaders should recollect the fable of the "Monkey and the Cheese". (Laughter.) The question therefore arises was it necessary to bankrupt Bengal to destroy the coterie that preached self-government by a communal majority? If so, the present Ministry has done well bringing also a judgment on the League majority in Bengal. Therefore let us be reasonable and select a leader who is not communal, one who can rally all the three main forces together in the country, viz., Muslim, Hindu and British and work for the

good of the Empire, the country and even for the very leaders themselves. It is rumoured in some quarters that the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan could lead us and form an All-Parties Government. If this is not so, then let us rally round the European Leader Mr. Hendry. Let him form a Cabinet taking men from both sides of the House selecting the very best. There will then be no need of appeasing those who blindly follow by providing them with appointments, etc., at the expense of the country. For this only reminds one of an American Gangster who has to provide for his followers for doing what he desires right or wrong. (Hear, hear.) We should not allow the resources of our country to be frittered away, and bring misery and woe to the people. In the circumstances it would be better if section 93 of the Act was applied and the Governor took over charge of the province. He could then form an Advisory Council with members from the various communities and important bodies such as landlords, trade and commerce and labour, etc. It is high time that things were put right. What we want is good Government. This would give the fighting element in the House an opportunity of enlisting themselves and going off to Burma to fight the Japs and regain Burma and other British possessions. (Laughter.) We should also deal in the same manner with the Calcutta Corporation where things are as bad, if not worse. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. D. GLADDING: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have seen some deficit Budgets in Bengal, especially in the dark days of the Meston Settlement, but never the likes of this one: a deficit on revenue account of 7½ crores and a closing indebtedness of 14 crores, against a temporarily inflated revenue of 18½ crores; to which has still to be added the large expenditure on the rationing scheme which Government have in hand. The accumulated debt from the days of the Meston Settlement, which the Niemeyer Award wiped out for us, was 8 crores odd, or only half as much as the debt with which we are likely to end this year on the Finance Minister's showing. The financial outlook is frankly appalling, but we all know that circumstances have compelled the Finance Minister to decide upon these large commitments; and, though it break us, this expenditure will have to go forward. The European party approve the plans to deal with the food crises that are behind these estimates, and they will vote for the supplies in question. We shall also support any supplementary demands that may be necessary for the proper execution of Government's policy.

Having only a few minutes at my disposal, I have my party's permission to devote them, not to the usual run of comments on the budget, but to an external point of first class importance that finds no mention in the Finance Minister's speech. Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal touched upon it on Thursday afternoon in the debate on the Agricultural Income-tax Bill, and others have already followed suit. We gather that, in approaching the Government of India for financial assistance, the Bengal Government has so far done no more than make a request for loans; and we gather that the Government of India are not too anxious even to lend us the money. If these deductions are correct, we are horrified, and we want a new approach

to be made to the Government of India immediately. We say that Bengal has a strong case for asking the Centre for real financial assistance and not merely for loans. Some have suggested that the Centre should foot the whole bill for the food crisis in which we are involved. That is going too far. We must not spoil a good case by being unreasonable. To say, for instance, that the food crisis is entirely the result of the war is bad exaggeration. The food crisis is in no small part the result of natural calamities having no connection with the war at all. But it is in large part undoubtedly the result of the war and its special pressure on this particular corner of India; in greater part, in fact, than was suggested by Mr. Suhrawardy, as I heard him, in the analysis of causes which he gave to us on Thursday afternoon. I have no time to give my reasons but, in my estimate, the scarcity and high price of foodgrains in this province are about 60 per cent. attributable to the war directly or indirectly. I shall put it at that and no higher than that. Nor is it correct to argue that expenditure that is attributable to the war should, solely for that reason, be a charge entirely upon the Centre. That has never been the view of the European party. Within reason, we must meet it ourselves; that is why we supported the Finance Bill in the last session, although in our opinion it offended against some canons of taxation; and that is why we have supported the Agricultural Income-tax Bill in this session, despite the present circumstances of the province, and will support the impending Bill to enhance the Sales Tax, which, in our opinion, should not have been put off for a future session. Nor, again, can we ask the Centre for a grant-in-aid to finance advances which we expect to recover; these warrant a demand for a loan and nothing more. But, when all allowances have been made, there will remain an honourable case for direct subvention, and that case should be put to the Government of India, as quickly as the Finance Department can document it.

As to details, why should we not revive the province's demand for the net proceeds of the whole of the export duty on jute grown in the province? Section 140 of the Government of India Act expressly provides that this may be given to us by an Order of His Majesty in Council. We have always held that we were entitled to the whole, and I do not understand why we have let the matter rest for all these years. Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, my old master, in the first Bengal Budget speech under the present constitution, when we had bright financial prospects so unlike those of today, made the statement that the Government of Bengal would continue to press for the whole of this duty. So far as I am aware, they have never raised the issue at all. Well, let them raise it now. In so doing, they will not be asking for a crude subvention. They will simply be asking for a transfer of revenues that is contemplated in the Act of the Constitution.

For the rest, let them go to that able man, Sir Jeremy Raisman, who has done so much for India as a whole, and plead with him to give his best thought to our predicament. If he says that a particular part of India, hit by calamity as we are, must consume its own smoke, ask him

what about the subventions given by the Government of India in the case of the Bihar and Darjeeling earthquakes? And what about the War Risks Insurance Ordiances, the object of which was that the cost of restoring damage by enemy action to an area like industrial Calcutta should be shared by the whole of India including industrialists whose property was in no conceivable risk of being hurt itself? Even ask him, if you like, whether "Famine" is a provincial subject. The word is nowhere to be found in the 7th Schedule; and I doubt whether it is covered by item 29 of the provincial list ("production, supply and distribution of goods") or by item 32 ("relief of the poor"). If he is unwilling to concede that our food crisis is largely the result of the war, suggest to him that the relief of our population in their distress should nevertheless be classed as a war measure, because the armed forces are operating from this terrain and the morale of our people, including their whole attitude to Government, is at stake. Remind him that his purchasing operations, which are tremendous, are exempt from our Sales Tax and that his numerous war offices in this province are exempt from our Electricity Duty. Draw his attention to the very different picture in other major provinces, whose revenues, like ours, are inflated by the war but whose expenditure is not suffering from the war like ours. In rising order of prosperity, according to their budget figures which have probably by now been outstripped, Madras will end this year with a revenue surplus of ten lakhs and with 38½ lakhs tucked away in a Revenue Reserve Fund. Bombay will have a surplus of 70 lakhs, with 134 lakhs tucked away in a Special Development Fund and 83 lakhs in a Post-War Reconstruction Fund. The United Provinces will have a surplus of 1 crore 56 lakhs, with 1 crore 30 lakhs in a Revenue Reserve Fund; and the Punjab will have a surplus of 1 crore 71 lakhs, with 90 lakhs tucked away in a Peasants' Welfare Fund and 39 lakhs in a Special Development Fund. In contrast with this, Bengal, unless the Centre relents, will end this war with a millstone of debt round its neck, while other provinces have reserves with which to exploit the opportunities, and meet the needs, that will succeed the declaration of peace. Ask him also to count his own blessings. The Government of India is in a much stronger financial position than any other Government involved in the war: stronger both as regards public debt and as regards budgetary equilibrium. He is able to borrow money on Treasury Bills at 1 per cent. and on loans at 3 per cent. His ways and means position is exceptionally comfortable, and will be more so when he proceeds to collect Extra Profits Tax in instalments. There will be other points which the Finance Department, from their expert knowledge, will be able to put to him. In the time at my disposal I have only been able to give a rough outline of the way in which we look at the matter. We have, in fairness, a very strong case; and I, for one, feel confident that, if the Ministry go in and state it, they will not do so in vain. If they fail to get a proper response, then we must debate the matter again at our next session. And I, personally, shall feel so bitter about it that I had better, perhaps, be forbidden to speak.

Before sitting down, I have a word to say about the Calcutta Corporation and the difficulties, attributable to the war, in which it is placed. What I

have said about relief to Bengal applies to that body as well. We are of opinion that the Corporation has a stronger case for out-and-out State subsidy than has yet been acknowledged by Government; and we hold that a major part of that subsidy should be a charge upon the Centre. We may not be satisfied with the Corporation's administration; in fact, we are far from satisfied. But that is a different matter, and in no way affects the broad principle of which we are speaking.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Mr. Speaker, the framer of a provincial budget in "prosperous British India" need not be a student of Economics. I do not say that the Hon'ble Finance Minister is not one. He need have no imagination and he need not know the science and art of making a correct nation-building budget. As the custodian of the provincial exchequer he has hardly to think of nation-building having one and only one task assigned to him which may not inaptly be called nation-bleeding. Beg, borrow or steal, he will have to find the wherewithal to maintain what may euphemistically be called Law and Order, but which in reality means to keep the people in perpetual subjection and just fit to be exploited by the powers that be. Having practically emptied the coffers over Law and Order he has the sorry satisfaction of meeting out a dole here and a dole there to the starving nation-building heads. Since the beginning of budget-making of the province we have witnessed this grim humour practised on the floor of what we have learnt to call the nation's Parliament.

Since the outbreak of the war which professedly is being tought for freedom and fellowship for all peoples under the sun—and we are no exception to it, and why should we be when we are having a share in its suffering and also have been marked out by Atlantic Charter or Pacific Charter, I do not know, for a share in its coming blessings—a new factor has made its appearance which must affect any budget as it affected Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee's budget of 1942-43 so much so that he had to call it a War Budget. Added to Law and Order, Civil Defence and other things brought about by the war consume practically the whole of the Government's revenue. Our exhortation that abnormal expenditures arising out of war conditions, at least a large portion of them, should be borne by the Central Government has not borne and is not likely to bear any fruits as events show.

This is how the war affects our budget. After the war or rather coincident with it or to put it more correctly caused by it comes the famine to which the Hon'ble Finance Minister gives poignant expression in his inimitable style in one short sentence—"Bengal is today bent double with woe and agony". Apart from Law and Order and Civil Defence and things of that kind which must have their pound of flesh, whether we live or die, the famine has this year demanded the budget-maker's attention to a very great extent. Reading between the lines one sees the Hon'ble Finance Minister's anxiety to have his budget recognised and styled as a Famine Budget. In a manner it is. We have no reason to deny it, but it is quite another to admit that there is any indication in the budget that Government are anxious to tackle the famine situation in the right manner. Their sheet-anchor at the present crisis seems to be governmental purchase of foodgrains

and standard cloth. Before the year is out the Government will have spent Rs. 10 crores for grains, 7½ crores for standard cloth and ½ crore for salt. Besides they intend to spend Rs. 16 crores for *aus* crop. The total amount is very large indeed and makes us apprehensive. Apart from nepotism, jobbery, profit-sharing, pocketing and other *jagaar car* methods involved in the transactions, purchase by the Government in the past has not proved helpful in solving the problem. In some respects this has proved positively harmful. These extraordinary expenses, good or bad as they may be, will create an unprecedented and alarming deficit of 7½ crores on revenue account on the Hon'ble Finance Minister's showing. We have no doubt that the deficit would be much larger if the Government do not intend to toy with the famine situation but to fight it effectively. I have no time to show it in detail. Even as the budget stands it does not include any provision for the cost of rationing that is proposed to be introduced shortly nor does it include any provision for the likely loss on trading account in respect of the purchase of *aus* crop.

The question now is how to provide a cover for this deficit? The first is a tax on agricultural income for which necessary legislation has already been introduced. A second measure will come later on in the shape of an enhancement of the Sales Tax. The proceeds from these two sources will be late and slow in coming. In the meantime the Government will go on borrowing. This in short sums up the Hon'ble Finance Minister's famine budget. As it has already been shown from this side of the House in dealing with the Agricultural Income-tax Bill, it will be the height of unwisdom to impose any fresh burden on the province at this stage. What therefore remains is to tap other likely sources, thinking of which one is reminded of the fact that the situation has been brought about very largely, as has just been admitted by my honourable friend, Mr. Gladding, by the war and partly by natural calamities. In either case we very naturally and very reasonably expect that the Government of India will come to our help. I am inclined to go further, namely, that His Majesty's Government must come to our aid. Not merely humanity but expediency and statesmanship also demand that the starving millions of this war base must be saved from death if the war is to be fought successfully and if the professed war aims are not mere pretensions.

In this connection, I ask Government, are Government prepared even now to declare Bengal a famine area and approach the Government of India and His Majesty's Government for necessary help? Are they prepared to declare here and now that if their proposal is resisted and they return empty-handed, they will come to the people's side and make a popular approach to the problem? If they do that, we are with them. If they understand the situation, and if they honestly and sincerely make this declaration today, the sentiment which has been so nicely expressed by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in the concluding paragraph of his statement, namely, that "we the people of Bengal—nay, we the people of India—should prayerfully resolve that, however artfully some sovereign *Demiurgus* in the stars may have cast our parts, each one of us will be steeled by

adversity and impelled to be united in a common endeavour to allay suffering," will find an echo in every heart in Bengal. That is the way not merely of fighting the famine and balancing the famine budget but also of ushering in a new era in this province.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED : মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আজ বাংলার বজেট আলোচনার প্রথমেই আমার মনে পড়ে, সাধারণতঃ বজেট আলোচনাতে আমরা দেখি বজেটের কোন কোন item জনসাধারণের মঙ্গলের জন্য বা জাতিগঠনমূলক কোন বিভাগে কত টাকা বরাদ্দ হয়েছে এবং সেই সব আলোচনা সাধারণতঃ করে থাকি। কিন্তু এই বজেটে জাতিগঠনমূলক কোন কথাই নাইই, কোন বরাদ্দ ত নাইই, বরং যেসব ছিল, সে সবের চিহ্নও দেখা যায় না। এর instance একটা দিতে পারি। আমরা মনে করেছিলাম, বর্ত্তমান Muslim League মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী অন্ততঃ আর কিছু না করুন, Islamic শিক্ষার জন্য মাদ্রাসাগুলির যেসব ব্যবস্থা আছে, তার grantগুলি অন্ততঃ রেখে দিবেন। কিন্তু বজেট দেখ্‌তে গেলে দেখা যায় যে এমন কি junior মাদ্রাসাগুলি এর আগে যে recurring grant প্রতি বৎসর পেত, তারও কোন ব্যবস্থা কোথায়ও নেই। শুধু তাই নয়, জাতিগঠনমূলক ব্যবস্থার ত কোন উল্লেখই নাই এবং তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আমরা দেখতে পাই যে আজ ৭॥০ কোটি টাকার ঘাটতি বজেট আমাদের সম্মুখে আনা হয়েছে এর কোনই justification নেই। কেহ বল্‌তে পারেন আপনারা এর দ্বারা really জাতিগঠনমূলক কোন কাজ হবে? যে প্রদেশের আয় হচ্ছে ১৪ হতে ১৮ কোটি টাকা, সেই প্রদেশের বজেটে যদি ৭॥০ কোটি টাকা ঘাটতি হয়, তাহলে এই বজেট কোন্ বুদ্ধিমান লোকের দ্বারা রচিত হয়েছে বলা যায় না। শুধু তাই নয়—বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর অপচেষ্টার ফলে এবং তাদের প্রভু ইংরাজ বণিকদের সন্তুষ্ট করবার চেষ্টার জন্য আজ বাংলাদেশে খাদ্য-সমস্যা যে ভীষণ আকার ধারণ করেছে, যখন প্রতিদিন শত শত লোকের অনাহারে মৃত্যুর খবর আমরা পাচ্ছি, যখন বাংলাদেশের হাজার হাজার লোক প্রতিদিন অনাহারে মরে যাচ্ছে—সেই সময়ে বাংলাদেশে, আমার মতে, আর কোন আলোচনা থাক্‌তে পারে না। কারণ যেখানে মানুষের জীবন বিপন্ন সেখানে তার প্রতিকার ভিন্ন অন্য কাজ থাক্‌তে পারে না। বজেটই বলুন, আর আইন-কানুনই বলুন, মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীই বলুন, যা কিছু বলুন না কেন—বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণকে রক্ষা করার জন্যই এই সবের ব্যবস্থা। যেখানে বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণ আজ না খেয়ে দিনের পর দিন মরে যাচ্ছে—তাদের সেই অবস্থা প্রতিকারের জন্য মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এ পর্য্যন্ত কিছুই করেন নাই। অবশ্য কিছু যা করেছেন, আমি তাতে বলব যে তাঁরা জনসাধারণের যতটুকু মঙ্গল করেছেন তার চেয়ে অমঙ্গল করেছেন অনেক বেশী আর এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর Civil Supply বিভাগের মন্ত্রী মাননীয় সুরাবর্দ্দী সাহেব যে anti-hoarding drive করেছিলেন, তাদ্বারা আমাদের বাংলার জনসাধারণের হাতে যে সামান্য খাদ্যশস্য ছিল, সেগুলি সেখান থেকে সরান হয়েছিল এবং কলিকাতা ও হাওড়ার merchant দিগকে বাদ দিয়ে রাখা হয়েছিল, কারণ জনসাধারণের কাছে যে সব খাদ্যশস্য ছিল, তা তাদের কাছে এসে জমা হোক এই ছিল তার উদ্দেশ্য। প্রথম অপকর্ম্ম তিনি এই করেছিলেন। তারপর কিছুদিন আগে, এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর পক্ষ থেকে খাদ্য-মন্ত্রী সুরাবর্দ্দী সাহেব একটা বিবৃতি দিলেন বাংলাদেশে খাদ্যশস্যের কোন ঘাটতি নেই। কিন্তু বহুদিন চিন্তার পর তিনি বুঝতে পারলেন যে সত্যসত্যই বাংলাদেশের সর্ব্বত্র খাদ্যশস্যের ঘাটতি আছে। যখন এই কথা তিনি বুঝতে পারলেন, তখন তিনি অর্ব্বাচীনের মত (এ অতি সাধারণ কথা) সর্ব্বত্র যখন ঘাটতি আছে, সেখানে খাদ্যদ্রব্যের সরবরাহের ব্যবস্থা না করে তিনি খাদ্যশস্যের দর ঠিক করে দিয়ে

price control করে দিলেন। এর ফল এই হল যে বাংলাদেশের সহরগুলিতে, মফঃস্বলের বাজারগুলিতে যেসব ধান ও চাল বিক্রী হত, সেগুলি সেখান থেকে সরে গেল এবং মফঃস্বলের বাজার ও সহরের কোথায়ও চাল ধান মিলল না। অবশ্য যারা পয়সার অভাবে কিনতে পারত না, তারা ত কষ্ট ভোগ করতই এবং মৃত্যুমুখে পতিত হতই কিন্তু যাদের হাতে পয়সা ছিল; তারাও এই control করার ফলে বাজারে এবং সহরে চাল ধান পেল না। টাকা পয়সা থাকলেও চাল ধান কিনবার মত ক্ষমতা তাদের রইল না। কাজেই এই control দ্বারা আমি বলব যে বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণের কোন মঙ্গল না করে অমঙ্গল অনেক বেশী করেছেন। কোটি কোটি মণ চাল বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন জায়গা থেকে এই কলিকাতায় ও হাওড়ায় জমা হয়েছিল, তা আমরা বুঝতে পারি কিন্তু সেগুলির কোন হিসাব নেই। সেই চাল কোথায় চলে গেল তার পাত্তা নেই। আর একটা অপকর্ম্মের কথা আমি বলতে চাই, সেটা হচ্ছে এই যে Supply Departmentএর মন্ত্রী নিজেই বলেছেন বাংলার সর্ব্বত্র খাদ্যশস্যের ঘাটতি, তিনিই আবার ঘোষণা করলেন কতকগুলি জেলা, সেগুলি আউশ ধানের বেলায় Surplus District. ময়মনসিং জেলাকে Surplus District বলা হয়েছে আউশ ধানের বেলায়। ময়মনসিং জেলার ভৌগলিক জ্ঞান যদি তার কিছু মাত্র থাকত, তাহলে একথা তিনি বলতে পারতেন না। হয়ত তিনি অন্য কারও মুখ থেকে শুনেছেন। ময়মনসিং জেলায় আউশ ধান কোন দিন surplus হয় না। ময়মনসিং জেলার কিশোরগঞ্জ ও নেত্রকোণা মহকুমার যেসব অঞ্চল হাওড় ও বিল তথায় আউশ ধান জন্মে না। তারপর অসময়ে বন্যা হওয়ায় জামালপুর মহকুমার পশ্চিম অঞ্চলে আউশ ধান প্রায় সবই ডুবে গেছে। টাঙ্গাইলের প্রায় সর্ব্বত্র আউশ ধান ডুবে গেছে। তা সত্ত্বেও ময়মনসিং জেলাকে Surplus District বলে ঘোষণা করা হয়েছে। তার কি উদ্দেশ্য আমরা জানি। আমরা এর প্রমান পেয়েছি। ময়মনসিং জেলাকে Surplus District ঘোষণা করেছেন যে জন্য এবং অন্যান্য জেলাকেও সেই জন্যই ঘোষণা করেছেন অর্থাৎ এই ময়মনসিং জেলার যে সমস্ত জায়গায় আউশ ধান জন্মাক না কেন, সেইগুলি সেখান থেকে সরাতে হবে এবং তাদের প্রভু ইংরেজ বণিকদের হাতে নিয়ে ফেলতে হবে এবং তাদের নিজস্ব Agent Ispahani Companyকে বড় করতে হবে। এইজন্য তাকে Surplus District ঘোষণা করেছেন আমরা জানি। আমি জানি ময়মনসিং জেলার লোক না খেয়ে মরছে; জামালপুরে কত লোক না খেয়ে মরছে। সে অতি সত্য কথা। এই কালকেও চিঠি পেয়েছি তাতে ৪।৫ জনের মৃত্যুসংবাদ সহ চিঠিখানা পেয়েছি। এ সত্ত্বেও এই জামালপুর থেকে Ispahani Companyর Agentগণ দ্বারা হাজার হাজার মণ ধান ও চাল খরিদ করে অন্যত্র চালান দেওয়া হচ্ছে। মফঃস্বলের লোক খাদ্যাভাবে মরে যাচ্ছে। সেখানের ধান চাল সেই সব জায়গায় বিলি ব্যবস্থা করলে লোক বাঁচতে পারত। সেই ব্যবস্থা না করে সেখান থেকেও Government Agentরা ক্রয় করছে এবং কোথায় নিয়ে যাচ্ছে কোন খবর নেই। সেই সব আমরা জানি। আমার পূর্ব্বে অনেক বক্তা এই সম্পর্কে অনেক বক্তৃতা করেছেন এবং এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর যে সব defect সেই সব ধরে দিয়েছেন এবং Supply Departmentএর আগা-গোড়া ঘুষের কাজ চলছে তা খুলে বলেছেন। সেই সব আমার পূর্ব্বে শশাঙ্কশেখর সান্যাল মহাশয়ও যথেষ্ট বলেছেন, কিন্তু সেই সব বললে হবে কি? যত সত্য কথা আমরা বলি না কেন, বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী সেই সত্য কখনও স্বীকার করবেন না এবং সত্যকে ঢাকা দেবার চেষ্টা করবেন। আমি জানি এই মাত্র আমার একজন বন্ধু বলে দিলেন, চোরা না শোনে ধর্ম্মের কাহিনী। তাঁর কথামতই আমি একথা বলছি। এই সঙ্গে আমার আর একটি কথা হচ্ছে

এই—আমি শুধু স্মরণ করিয়ে দিতে চাই, মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর সমর্থক Muslim Leagueএর ভাই যাঁহারা আছেন, তারা একবার চিন্তা করুন এই যে বাংলাদেশকে Muslim majority province বলে আপনারা গর্ব্ব করেন—এই যে আপনাদের কথিত পূর্ব্ব পাকিস্থান, তার জনসংখ্যা কিভাবে কমে যাচ্ছে, সেটা Muslim Leagueএর ভাইরা ভেবে দেখুন। আর বিশেষ করে আমি আমার Scheduled Caste ভাইদের একথা বলতে চাই—অন্ততঃ আমার অঞ্চলের Scheduled Caste ভাইদের কথা আমি জানি—তাঁদের মধ্যে অনেকে মৎস্যজীবী লোক আছেন তারা অনেক রকম ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য করে, মৎস্য ধরে জীবনধারণ করেন। কিন্তু মফঃস্বলে তাঁদের অবস্থা বর্ত্তমানে যা দাঁড়িয়েছে, তাতে অন্ততঃ শতকরা ৬০।৭০ জন মৃত্যু বরণ করতে বাধ্য হচ্ছে। এই অবস্থায় এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে। এই নিয়ে তাঁরা কি কিছু ভাবছেন? তাঁরা শুধু চোখ বুজে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীকে সমর্থন করে যাচ্ছেন। সেই সব তাঁরা যেন চিন্তা করে দেখেন। অমনি মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীকে চোখ বুজে সমর্থন যেন না করেন। বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর সমর্থকদের অবস্থা এই রকম দাড়িয়েছে অর্থাৎ তাঁরা যেন আজ নেশাখোরের মত চলেছেন। হতে পারে ১৭।১৮ জন লোকের নেশার ব্যবস্থা হয়েছে। সকলের এই রকম নেশার ব্যবস্থা ত হয় নি। তাঁদের চিন্তা করে দেখা দরকার তাঁরা যেন সত্যকে কেউ গোপন করতে দেবেন না—অসত্য যা আছে, তা প্রকাশ করে দেবেন। আর মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী—খাজা সাহেবেরা—এই Muslim League প্রভাবশালী দল বলে গর্ব্ব করে থাকেন। কাল Civil Supplyএর মন্ত্রী, মাননীয় সুরাবর্দ্দী সাহেব ইতরের ভাষায় জনৈক memberকে আক্রমণ করেছিলেন আমি দেখেছি। তাঁর এক মাত্র গর্ব্ব Muslim Leagueএর প্রভাব, কিন্তু তাঁকে স্মরণ করিয়ে দেই Russian Czarএর কথা। তিনিও প্রভাবশালী ছিলেন—তিনি সেজন্য জনসাধারণকে অগ্রাহ্য করতেন, কিন্তু জনসাধারণই তাঁকে চূর্ণ বিচূর্ণ করেছিল। আজ বাংলার জনসাধারণ যখন Muslim Leagueএর ধোকাবাজি বুঝতে পারবে তখন তার প্রভাব কোথায় চলে যাবে, ধূলায় মিশে যাবে—এ কথা যেন তাঁরা মনে রাখেন।

Khan Sahib Maulvi Md. HASANUZZAMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, বাংলার বজেট আলোচনা উপলক্ষে সামান্য কিছু বলিবার সুযোগ পাইয়া নিজেকে ধন্য মনে করিতেছি। বজেট আলোচনা অনেকবার দেখিয়াছি ও করিয়াছি, কিন্তু আলোচনা করিলেই কেবল চলিবে না, কাজে পরিণত হওয়ার ব্যবস্থাও করিতে হইবে। বিরোধী দলে যাঁহারা আছেন তাঁহারা অপর দলকে আক্রমণমূলক সমালোচনা করিতেই মজবুত। নিজের কাঁধে দায়িত্ব আসিলে যতটুকু বলেন, ততটুকু করিতে দেখা যায় না। বিরোধী দল যাহাই বলুক, আর নাই বলুক, আমি মন্ত্রী দলের সমর্থক হিসাবে কয়েকটী জরুরি বিষয়ের প্রতি সমস্ত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করিতেছি। সুজলা সুফলা বাংলা আজ খাদ্যাভাবে ও খাদ্য-সমস্যার উপযুক্ত প্রতিকারের অভাবে শ্মশানে পরিণত হইতেছে। কে তার খবরাখবর রাখে। গত কল্যকার বক্তৃতাতে সকলেই কলিকাতা, চট্টগ্রাম ও অন্যান্য সহরের দুর্দ্দশা ও দুরবস্থার কথা সমালোচনা করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু সর্ব্বহারা, দিশেহারা পল্লী অঞ্চলের জনসাধারণের কথা তাঁহাদের দৃষ্টি হইতে বাদ পড়িয়াছে। মূক, নিরন্ন পল্লীবাসী নীরবে সহ্য করিয়া যায়, মুখে কিছু বলিতে জানে না। সুতরাং তাহাদের দুর্দ্দশার ব্যথা উপরওয়ালাদের গোচরীভূত হয় না। হাজার হাজার লোক পল্লীতে না খাইতে পাইয়া মারা যাইতেছে—কে তার খবর রাখে? Supply Minister সাহেব বাংলার জন্য যথেষ্ট চাউল ও অন্যান্য খাদ্যশস্যের ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন বলিয়া শুনা যাইতেছে। জানি না এই সব চাউল ও খাদ্যশস্য কোথায় যাইতেছে। পল্লীবাসীর ভাগ্যে তাহার এই চাউলের সামান্য মাত্রও বরাদ্দ হয় নাই। তাই আমি অনুরোধ করি, প্রত্যেক

unionএ controlled shopএর ব্যবস্থা সত্বর করা হউক। তদনাথায় সারা বাংলা মহাশ্মশানে পরিণত হইবে। লক্ষ লক্ষ লোকের অন্নসংস্থানের ভার নেওয়ার পর মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এই ভাবে উদাসীনতা দেখাইলে খোদার অভিশাপ তাদের উপর পড়িবে। আমি জনৈক Ministerকে আমার ঐ অঞ্চলের দুর্দ্দশার কথা বলায় তিনি বিশ্বাস করিতেই রাজী হইলেন না। শুধু officerদের কথায় বিশ্বাস করিলে বর্ত্তমান সময়ে চলিবে না। বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী Relief Organisation আরম্ভ করিয়াছেন দেখিয়া সুখী হইলাম। ইহার reportএর উপর reliefএর ব্যবস্থা হইবে। তাঁহাদিগকে অনুরোধ করি, বর্ত্তমান সঙ্কটজনক সমস্যায় reportএর জন্য অপেক্ষা না করিয়া তাঁহারা মফঃস্বলে মফঃস্বলে ঝাঁপাইয়া পড়ুন এবং officer ও সর্ব্বসাধারণের প্রতিনিধিদের নিয়া আশু সাহায্যের ব্যবস্থা করুন।

Mr. Ishaque সাহেবের Jute Departmentএর উপর বিস্তর কাজ চাপাইয়া দেওয়া হইয়াছে। আমার বিবেচনায়, এমন আর একটী bogus department আছে কিনা সন্দেহ। কাজের বেলা কিছুই না—কেবল reportএর ছড়াছড়ি। এই departmentএর officerদের দুরস্ত করা দরকার।

এবার গভর্ণমেণ্ট ধান ও চাউলের price control করিয়াছেন। এই controlএর অর্থ কি? কে করে supervision? এই রকম bogus controlএর দ্বারা কোন কাজই হইবে না। মাত্র কোন কোন Police Officerদের পকেট বোঝাইর ব্যবস্থা হইয়াছে। আমি জানি, জনৈক constable এক বাজারে গিয়া বলিয়াছে—বাবা, আমার পকেটে কিছু দাও; তোমরা যে দরে ইচ্ছা বিক্রী কর। জনৈক Circle Officerএর সঙ্গে আলাপে তিনি বলিলেন, Departmentএর এই সমস্ত officerদের উপর strict supervisionএর ভার নেওয়া দরকার। নতুবা control successful হইবে না।

বর্ত্তমান Agriculture Minister সম্বন্ধে ২।১টী কথা না বলিলে নয়। প্রথমতঃ নবাব বাহাদুর এই departmentএর ভারপ্রাপ্ত মন্ত্রী ছিলেন। তাঁহার এই বিভাগের তেমন অভিজ্ঞতা নাই বলিয়া অনেকের বিশ্বাস। পরে Hon'ble Tamizuddin সাহেব এই বিভাগের ভার নিলেন। তাঁকে কেহ ভাল, কেহ মন্দ বলেন। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান সময়ে যিনি এই বিভাগের ভার নিয়াছেন, তাঁহার পল্লী সম্বন্ধে অনেকটা সংশ্রব আছে বলিয়া আমাদের ধারণা ছিল। কিন্তু তাঁহার আমলে এবার seed distribution একেবারে untimely হইয়াছে। বীজ লাগাইবার সময় পার হইয়া যাওয়ার পর বীজ পৌঁছিয়াছে। তাহাও বীজ ধানের নামে বোরা ধান। তাঁহাকে ভবিষ্যতের জন্য সচেতন থাকিতে অনুরোধ করিতেছি।

Education Department সম্বন্ধেও সামান্য কিছু জরুরি বিষয় না বলিলে কর্ত্তব্যের ত্রুটি হইবে। বর্ত্তমান Government Primary teacherদের জন্য যৎকিঞ্চিৎ dearness allowanceএর ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু Secondary বিভাগের জন্য অদ্যাবধি কোন ব্যবস্থাই করেন নাই। Aid বাড়াইয়া দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থাও হয় নাই। Educationএর উপর এইরূপ উদাসীন হওয়ার কারণ কি? আমাদের Laksham ও Paschimgaon H. E. School এবং অন্যান্য Educational Institutions এবার acquire করিয়া নেওয়া হইয়াছে। এ বিষয় কি মন্ত্রী বাহাদুর কোন খবর রাখেন?

Co-operative Departmentএর আর এক অবিচারের কথা শুনিলে অবাক হইবেন। Government নাকি এই সাব্যস্ত করিয়াছেন যে Chittagong Divisionএর কোন Central

Bankকে কোন crop loan দেওয়া হইবে না। বাংলার মন্ত্রিত্বের দাবী করিয়া একটা বিভাগ বাদ দেওয়ার কারণ কি? বাংলার শাসনসংস্কার হইতে আমাদিগকে একেবারে বাদ দিয়া দিন। অন্যথা আমাদের crop loanএর ব্যবস্থা করুন।

Agriculture Tax সম্বন্ধে এই মাত্র বলিবার আছে যে বাংলার জমিদারগণ শোষণ করিয়া নানাভাবে কৃষক সমাজের সর্ব্বস্ব নিয়াছেন। আজ তাঁহারা জমিদার আর আমরা সর্ব্বহারা কৃষকদল। আমাদের উপর আর নূতন কোন tax না বসাইয়া জমিদারদের উপর এই tax করা উচিত। জমিদারের কাছে যে অর্থ আছে ইহা কৃষকেরই হাড়ভাঙ্গা পরিশ্রমের টাকা।

আমার বন্ধুগণের মধ্যে কেহ কেহ Chittagong Divisionএর Minister সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলিবার জন্য বলিতেছেন। তাঁহার সম্বন্ধে অনেক কিছু বলিবার আছে। আজ সময় নাই। অদ্য এই মাত্র বলি—তিনি সংশোধন হউন। অন্যান্য বিষয় অন্য দিন সুযোগ পাইলে বলিবার আশা রহিল।

Mr. I. D. JALAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are meeting today to discuss the Financial Statement of the Government of Bengal under the shadow of a great catastrophe which has overtaken this province—a catastrophe which is unprecedented in the history of Bengal in recent times. Bengal which was described as " শস্য শ্যামলা " in the famous *Bandemataram* song of the Great Bankimchandra has been converted into a state in which people of rural Bengal have come to Calcutta in search of food and then are dying of starvation in hundreds in this second city of the British Empire. Can there be a worse condemnation of the Government of Bengal which has undertaken the responsibility of the Government of this province than that in a city like Calcutta hundreds and hundreds of men, women and children of this province should come in search of food and die of starvation? Nothing worse can happen. We can say anything we desire, but the responsibility of the Government of Bengal can never be shirked. The Government has failed at a moment which required the greatest energy, the greatest ability of the representatives of the people who have undertaken the reins of this Government out of their own choice. We remember, Sir, that six months ago when the Huq Ministry was in power a condemnation was voiced on the floor of this House and outside by the party which is in power today to the effect that that Government had failed to tackle the food problem and was incapable of tackling it and therefore the said party supported by the European group and the head of the province brought about the downfall of the Ministry with a view ostensibly to solve the food problem of this province in a way which was not at all commendable to the ordinary people. I need not, Sir, go into the history as to how the downfall of the last Ministry was brought about. We on this side of the House have got no concern whatsoever with this Ministry or the other; we are more concerned with the problems which are confronting us in this country, but we know that a great constitutional question was tackled by the head of this province in a way which was not satisfactory to the people. A Ministry which was enjoying the confidence of the majority of the House was made to resign by the head of the province to usher in a supposed new era in which people will get their food and will be governed better than

they were governed before. But what do we find? We find that instead of a satisfactory solution of the problem the situation has deteriorated beyond control and a situation has arisen in which people cannot but blame this Government which has taken the responsibility of the Government of this province according to their own desire. When they have taken the reins of Government they cannot shirk their duty and we who have got to voice the feelings of the people of the province will be failing in our duty if we do not unequivocally condemn this Government for what they have not done up till now to solve the food problem.

When the Government of Sir Nazimuddin came into power it held out hopes firstly that the political prisoners would be released. But what do we find today after six months of government of this province by Sir Nazimuddin's party? Sir Nazimuddin the other day stated that the reason why these political prisoners were not being released was because the Saigon radio was constantly agitating that the people of this country should rise in rebellion against the Government of this province and that there were men like Jai Prakash Narain who were agitating for a rebellion in Calcutta under the very nose of the Government of Bengal without being detected. That is one of the reasons why these two thousand political prisoners who are rotting in jail without any trial or proof of any charge against them should be detained for an indefinite period. If the argument of Sir Nazimuddin be correct, then there is no chance of these people being released during the duration of the war because it is not within our control to prevent the Saigon radio from propagating that the people of this country should rise in rebellion. Is that the thing which Sir Nazimuddin contemplated when he issued the statement at the time of taking over the reins of Government of this province? Was not the Saigon radio in existence at that time? Was not the situation which is prevailing today prevalent at that time? Did he utter these words in order to befool the public? I say, Sir, with deliberate decision that it was a vote-catching device without any desire to fulfil the promise. If there be any sincerity in him he should come forward and release the political prisoners. He has got his C.I.D. and police. If he finds that there is anything wrong again, the arms of law and the arms of police are long enough to bring them into their clutches again. If the Government are afraid of doing this, it is better that they should cease to exist and should surrender the seals of their office to the Governor and say that they are incapable of managing the affairs of this province.

The next question, Sir, which is agitating the people of this province is the food problem. When we go through the financial statement produced by my honourable friend, Mr. T. C. Goswami, who was at one time one of the leaders of the Congress party and who rebelled against the Congress party and joined the group which was against the official group and who has again left that party and has joined the Ministerial party, I believe, in order to do some good to this province, we seek in vain for any good which he has done. Why is he a member of the party which cannot control the

food situation and the problems which are before us? The financial statement which the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has produced before the House lacks imagination and I regret to observe that I cannot congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on the statement which he has produced on the floor of the House. What do we find? The Government announced that rationing will be introduced in Calcutta from the 1st of October and we find in the financial statement of the Government of Bengal that it has not yet been found possible to work out the full details of the cost of rationing which is going to be introduced shortly. Is that efficiency which the Government of Bengal can boast of? The question of rationing has been before the country for the last 8 or 9 months. Rationing has been introduced and is functioning successfully in Bombay which is not under popular control but under bureaucratic control under section 93. If they had been able to introduce rationing six months before the Government of Bengal had even thought of and that also successfully, is it to the credit of this Government that the financial statement should state that "it has not yet been found possible to work out the full details of the cost of rationing which is going to be introduced shortly? The cost is, however, expected to be considerable and a supplementary demand will have to be put in in due course". When will that "due course" come? Five months have elapsed since the time when the budget was produced before the House. Even after the expiry of five months the scheme of rationing, the cost of rationing, the amount which will be involved are not before the House even today. We can say that the Government of Bengal is being run efficiently? Certainly we shall say that the Government ought not to have announced to the public prematurely that rationing was going to be introduced in Calcutta from the 1st of October. If Government cannot introduce it in October and has to come again to the House saying that for certain reasons it cannot introduce it and wants some more time, then that is not the way in which Government ought to be conducted.

Then we find, Sir, that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has stated that 7½ crores of rupees will be the deficit of this province but it is not quite clear how he proposes to meet that deficit. If the Government of Bengal wanted to bring in the Agricultural Income-tax Bill before the House, why did it not bring it in time so that the money could be available in the course of the year? If the Government of Bengal wanted the increase in the Sales Tax to come into play in order to meet the deficit what prevented the Government from bringing in the necessary legislative measures by this time? If the Government of Bengal came to the conclusion that there was no other alternative but to borrow, then why is there no scheme for borrowing either from the Central Government or from the people? In that case how is it possible for you to meet the expenses which are before you?

So far as the food problem is concerned the less said the better. We find that this Ministry has failed to tackle the food problem in this sense that so far as this province is concerned first the Hon'ble the Food Minister came out with his statement that there was no shortage: Later on when he found that there was shortage he went to the Government of India for help and

succour and the Government of India found fault with the arrangements which were prevailing in this province. Now, if the Government of Bengal is to depend upon the charity of the Government of India, the Government of the Punjab, the Government of Assam and the Governments of other provinces, then we have got to tackle the problem in a proper manner, but what is the way in which the problem has been tackled? As a sample, I should place before the House the statement which Mr. Baldev Singh, a Minister of the Punjab Government, has made. This is a very serious statement which requires the earnest consideration of the Government of Bengal. He stated "there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that either the Bengal Government or the middlemen, stockists and millers are making profits from wheat and wheat products; otherwise the prices in Bengal should be at parity with the Punjab prices". Asked about pool in prices mentioned in Mr. Suhrawardy's statement he said, "These are out of date, because the Government of India have given up that system and since August 15 last, the Government of Bengal is purchasing direct from the Punjab and the prices paid by them are not more than Rs. 10-4 per maund which means a clear reduction of Rs. 1-6 per maund in the prices of wheat. The Punjab since August 15 last has despatched 50,000 tons of wheat and its products. The profits on this account alone made by the Bengal Government would be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 20 lakhs". Now, we do not find anything as to what has actually happened to this. We knew before that wheat was supplied by the Government at about Rs. 15 and *atta* was sold at the rate of about Rs. 19, and when these criticisms appeared, the rates were reduced. This is the impression which Punjab, the senior partner of *Pakisthan*, has got to say about the Government of Bengal. This is a serious indictment that one responsible Minister of the Punjab Government from whom we are to get our wheat and *atta* thinks that the Government of Bengal is making a profit of Rs. 20 lakhs. Is that the way in which we can inspire confidence in the neighbouring provinces? Even the responsible Members of the Executive Council have stated that so many wagons were going and that they did not know what was happening in Bengal. The wagons were there, and it was the mal-distribution which was going on in Bengal. Can you expect with a mentality like this which is prevailing in the Central Government, and with a mentality like this which has been shown by Mr. Baldev Singh, a Minister of the Punjab Government, to get succour from the neighbouring provinces? I say, Sir, that this Ministry has failed to put confidence in its administration to such an extent as to lose the sympathy of the neighbouring provinces and the Central Government. If Bengal has not got food enough for its own people, if other provinces look with scepticism to the efforts of the Bengal Government in tackling this problem, what earthly reason is there to think that we shall be able to solve the food problem of this province in a satisfactory way?

Now, Sir, I was always of the opinion that if the whole of India could have been taken as one unit without the provincial barriers, there would have been no difficulty like this, and I am glad to find, Sir, that so far as

the Government of India was concerned, it had come to the conclusion that the whole of India should be taken as one unit, but because of the opposition of the provinces, this was not possible. During the last budget discussion in my speech I dwelt upon this point at great length. I clearly expressed my view that there is a shortage in India, but that shortage is not so great as to justify deaths from starvation in Calcutta and thereafter the Government of India came to a similar conclusion. But the provinces went against it and therefore that decision could not be implemented. Now we have got to rely upon our home resources. What are we doing in this province? We are issuing statements and hoping that we shall succeed by doing so. We say that trade has not co-operated with Government; trade says that Government has not co-operated with them. The Government was purchasing rice at the rate of Rs. 25, Rs. 26, Rs. 27, Rs. 28, Rs. 29 and at any rate at which they could get rice. I know that the Government of Bihar was purchasing rice up to Rs. 20 a maund and not beyond it, but because of the operation of the Government of Bengal through its agents, even the Bihar Government had to purchase rice at the rate of Rs. 27 or Rs. 28 and thus they antagonised the Bihar Government and prevented the Bihar Government from rendering full help to the Bengal Government. It is a fact, Sir, that though there was a free Eastern zone, still there were officials of the Bihar Government who said that nobody could export rice outside the province. They said "we do not know anything. You can send grains to Bengal. We cannot prevent it, but we shall remember it". Can any person in view of this attitude of the officials do anything? This was due to the antagonising spirit in which the whole thing was done. Bihar was purchasing rice at Rs. 20 and the Bengal Government went there and competed with them and purchased at Rs. 27 and Rs. 28. This is a fact which is known to everybody and this is the way in which things have been done.

Enough has been said about Messrs. Ispahani & Co., Ltd. They are as good merchants as others are. I have got nothing more to say than this that there has been a tremendous amount of criticism about the way in which they are carrying on the Government business. It is in the interest of the Government's fair name and the name of Messrs. Ispahani & Co., Ltd., that they should come forward and face a proper enquiry into the matter. The fact is that even the brokers of this firm have earned lakhs of rupees. We do not know how far the charges against them are correct. The offer which was made by the Hon'ble Finance Minister to Dr. Mookerjee to look into the accounts is frivolous. We know that accounts were capable of being managed in a way in which the real state could not be found without a proper enquiry and cross-examination. There may be accounts in the names of *benamdars* or fictitious persons. It may be in the name of say, Ganeshdas Marwari, for instance or some such name. While I am taking this name I am not speaking about Ispahanis. What I am speaking of is that there may be accounts in the names of fictitious persons which it is very difficult to find out until and unless there is a sifting and proper enquiry about this. Therefore there is no meaning in the mere examination by two persons from the Accounts Department going and

looking at the papers. These persons will simply see that the balance sheet is quite all right, that the debit and credit sides are all right, that the names are given. Does the Government of Bengal take the responsibility that every name which is there is not fictitious or *benami* and is otherwise *bona fide*? How can the officials of the Audit Department find as to whether a particular name is correct and whether a person of that particular name exists at all in the world? Is there any machinery by which this can be found out except a sifting enquiry? In the interest of the fair name of the Government of Bengal and in the interest of the firm they should face an independent enquiry. If on enquiry it is found that everything is O.K. they need not be afraid. If on enquiry it is found that there is something wrong, people must know what remedy is there.

Let us now come to the controlled shops. If I want a bag of wheat, Sir, I am forced to go to the black market; otherwise I cannot get it. If I want *atta*, either I have to go and stand in a queue to get one seer of *atta* or I have to go to the black market or die of starvation. Is that the policy of Government? I am a consumer, say, with a family of 20 to 25 heads and I want a bag of wheat. Can the Government say where I am to get it? Where is the machinery by which I can get it save by my going to the black market? Is that sound management for the whole of the province? The entire population must be taken as a whole and the Government of Bengal must see that there is proper and equitable distribution for the rich and the poor, and for all who inhabit this unfortunate province. Sir, I have got just only one thing more to say. The state of affairs in which we find ourselves today is unsatisfactory and unsatisfactory to a great degree. Not only the Cabinet but the party which is supporting the Cabinet are responsible to the people of this province for anything that happens or may happen to this province. I am not interested in the shifting of blame from one party to another and I am quite positive that no amount of shifting can solve this problem in the face of the grave corruption which is prevailing from head to foot. Corruption and inefficiency are supposed to exist in ranks when the same is not expected. It must cease though I do not envisage any possibility of preventing such corruptions. Whatever machinery may be devised we cannot root out the evil because the allurement is too great and the ways in which it can be concealed are too many. Still I say, Sir, that utmost efforts of the party which is supporting this Ministry in this direction is necessary and the Ministry must be able to tackle this problem. Otherwise their names will go down to the future generations as failures in the history of Bengal.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my perversity compels me again to repeat that I find the atmosphere of the House unreal. Friends opposite have been opposing this budget as if it was produced by the present Finance Minister. They do not for a moment acknowledge that he is simply carrying somebody else's baby. The history of the last year and the previous budget is known to us all. One Finance Minister disappeared just before the budget was in the process of formation. Then the leader of the old group, the then Chief Minister who was also the Home

Minister took up the portfolio of Finance. Eighteen items, as you know, Sir, were passed. Six remained to be passed. If the criticisms were about any additions to or amendments of the old budget presented to the House by the old Finance-cum-Home Minister one would have understood that there was some reality and that there was something to be said about it. We are having this public expenditure of this session on a point which really does not appear to me to be real. Why don't they get up and say: "All right, the 18 items that were passed would be taken as passed. Let us discuss the remaining 6 items only. Let them be voted. Let us say something about them as we did when we were not in the opposition". That is not the thing. The whole problem turns on one point, how to make speeches whether real or unreal and how to pick holes in a thing which was of their own preparation. This, Sir, is self-condemnation of a type that requires beating. The honourable member who preceded me claimed to speak in the name of the commercial organisations of Calcutta and Bengal. May I also claim the privilege of speaking on behalf of the mercantile community because I represent that group here? Sir, the House should not forget the psychology of the merchant, be he a Marwari or a Mussalman. If I can make one hundredth part of a pie more than what I ordinarily can, I shall certainly make it. The honourable member who preceded me has with one brush tarnished not only the Finance Minister but the whole Cabinet and others who support them. May I appeal to him and may I point out to him that everything that is possible is being done, that his whole outlook is a bit difficult to understand? Had he looked at the problem purely from the commercial aspect he would have realised that the mess in Bengal was primarily created by the changing policies of the people at the Centre. Today it is free trade, tomorrow it is imposing the barriers, the third day somebody else comes and does something else. Speaking on a previous occasion on this problem I had even tried to exonerate the Cabinet before the present Cabinet because the only mistake that they committted was that they surrendered blind-fold to the vagaries of the Government of India. Had we been allowed to go ahead as we thought best perhaps things would not have gone so bad. That was not done and unfortunately the ex-Prime Minister went to Delhi and made a further mess at the Food Conference. Had that utterance of his not been made I feel certain that the sympathy of the Government of India, the other provincial Governments and the rest of India that is now flowing towards us would have come to us. The most responsible man from Bengal goes and says "Leave us alone, we are all right". What would my friends have done had they been at the Centre and in position of power?

Another point to which I should like to draw your attention, Sir, is the method suggested by the honourable member who spoke on behalf of the European group. We have done all that was possible. His idea and his suggestion that we should now go and urge upon the Central Government and ask them to take their share of responsibility, is, I hope one, which the Finance Minister will consider favourably. The mess here is as I have said before something in the nature of the mess which these great men and experts made in Hongkong, Singapore, Java and in Burma. They had not

thought of the possibility that Burma would go. They had not thought that Singapore would disappear and they had not thought that Calcutta would be raided. It follows, therefore, that the great experts sent everything that they could out of India through the United Kindom, Commercial Corporation and through various other agencies to the front in Africa, to the front in the Near East and also supplied the needs of neutrals and allies. I do not grudge that. But Saigon and Rangoon having disappeared we had to take the responsibility of Ceylon. I could go on talking like this but the fundamental fact that we are now loaded with the responsibility of a deficit of 7½ crores does not break my back. I feel that not seven but even if the debt of Bengal were to rise to seventy crores we are in a position to meet our long-term debts. Bengal was free from debt for a fairly long time. A calamity has now come and in this calamity not man but nature has also taken part. To control it and bring things to a proper level, Sir, we need all to join hands together not only within Bengal but every Provincial Government and the Government of India must be roped in. I want, Sir, in this connection to appeal to the Finance Minister to use all his influence not only for securing as much money as he can from the Finance Member of the Government of India but also to impress upon him and to impress upon the War Council in London or Washington, wherever it be, that the feeding of Bengal is now a war measure of the first order. They must place wheat at our disposal: they must send us, if not rice, every other kind of grain: and they must come forward now and accept the responsibility as one of the major responsibilities of the war. I do not know what will be done in October: I do not know whether our armies are going across the jungles of Burma towards the China Road: Newspapers speak about the recapture of Rangoon: whatever the military experts may think, if they want their military measures, to go forward, and the operational part of the war in the East to succeed, I feel that the time has come when one and all should realise that the eastern portion of India attaching to the borders of the war zone has to be kept going. You cannot fight the war at the front with people starving behind you. In this light, Sir, I feel that opposing, talking of things which they know to be incorrect, talking of things which they would realise are the outcome of the war, and not following the correct line for the most momentable period of sixteen months, is not right. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister deserves not only support but active encouragement in his efforts to balance the budget if he can or in his efforts to induce the Government of India to give to Bengal, under the united national demand of Bengal, all the money it needs.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget Estimate for 1943-44 as presented by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister finds a dismal reading and discloses a woeful picture of Bengal. It is indicative of a famine budget of the Government. The budget reveals a startling debt to the tune of 18 crores in the Revenue Account. But it is not a normal budget; so, this huge deficit need not stagger us at the present time in the peculiar situation in which Bengal finds herself today. The extent of the deficit is nothing unnatural and is quite understandable. In view of the

famine and pestilence now raging all over the province it is incumbent on the Government that they should take measures for the amelioration of the situation. The crying need of the hour is food and if the Government are to discharge their primary function they should provide food to the people of the province. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that the present budget should be more concerned with food than anything else. There is therefore nothing to wonder that the Government should have provided ten crores for the purchase of foodgrains for distribution at cheaper rates to the public and to its low paid servants, 7½ crores for the purchase of standard cloth and half a crore for the building up of a Reserve Fund. Besides Government intends to spend 16 crores on the purchase of 65 lakh maunds of *aus* paddy. Although a considerable portion of this money is recoverable, Government have estimated a loss of 3½ crores on the purchase of foodgrains. These are large-scale operations which are not required at normal times. Government have also undertaken another attempt to meet the present crisis, but as these operations involve sums which go up to crores, it is essential that their handling of such huge sums of public money should properly be scrutinised so that there should be no room for rumours or speculations. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister has not given any details about the trading activities; he has not said how he has arrived at the figure of ten crores; he has not said how much foodgrains have been bought out of the sum provided for; neither has he given us any idea as to through whom Government are either buying or intend to buy or from what areas the purchases have already been made; he has not also told us what is the actual cost price of Government purchases and what is the price at which they are distributing the purchased foodgrains to the public. What is necessary is that the House should be given these informations. There are so many allegations and ugly rumours floating about these grains transactions of Government that decency alone, apart from law, demands that the Government should have absolved itself of the attacks attaching to these transactions. All these details Government must lay before the House before they want us to vote for funds. They cannot expect us to sign a blank cheque. Again, the trading operations, I think, are not sufficient. A successful handling of the situation presupposes a policy and a programme on which the Finance Minister has not thrown any light. The people of Bengal have lost confidence in the control measures taken by Government from time to time. There is not one instance of a uniform policy that binds them together into a common whole. Neither the budget nor the statement of the Minister of Civil Supplies has thrown any illuminating light on this aspect.

In the next place, I would like to emphasize on another aspect of the case—the financial one, which is more germane to the budget proper. It is a commonplace in public finance that every effort should be made to make the estimates as near the actuals as it is possible. For the present, the budget of the Government violates this elementary principle. The amount of the actual deficit that would accrue in the end of the year is likely to surpass by a huge sum the estimated deficit. The budget does not make any provision for the estimated cost of rationing to be introduced shortly

nor does it include any probable loss arising out of the transactions of the *aus* paddy to the value of 60 crores. Government should have given us some idea as to the cost of these operations for a proper appreciation of the real position. It is therefore quite likely that the actual deficit at the year-end would exceed the estimated amount by a huge sum.

Lastly, I would say one word as to the manner in which the Government proposes to cover the huge deficit. They propose two new measures—the imposition of agricultural income-tax and the enhancement of the Sales Tax although they do not expect any revenue from these measures during the current year. So Government propose to cover the deficit by borrowing and the net addition to the debt burden amounts to 10½ crores. The present is the most inopportune time to impose a new taxation for the future resources of the province should have been mortgaged, rather Government should have been well advised if they could secure financial relief from the Centre and I congratulate my honourable friend Mr. Gladding for his very outspoken speech. Natural calamities apart, all the miseries that we find today in Bengal are more or less directly responsible to the fact that the province happens to be the basis of military operations against the Far Eastern army. The present situation in Bengal is in no small measure due to the bungling of the Central Government. It is the hasty denial policy of the Central Government that set the ball rolling. As a result the fear complex seized the people and prices began to rise. Moreover, much of the Civil Defence expenditure has been occasioned by Bengal's nearness to the war zone. It is quite in the fitness of things that a good portion of all the expenses should be borne by the Central Government. The Central Government cannot shirk their responsibility in the matter and it is not fair to saddle this province with the burden of the war emergency expenses. I should therefore like to know what attempts have been made by Government to get funds from the Central Government to cover the expenses and with what results. We think that if a vigorous and strong case had been put up before the Central Government, they could not have resisted the just demands of the Bengal Government. Certainly they would have been compelled to meet these expenses out of their own funds instead of passing the burden on the slender resources of a province.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN : মাননীয় Speaker সাহেব, কিছুদিন পূর্বে গত ২৫শে April মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় যখন মন্ত্রী হননি তখন একটি বিবৃতি খবরের কাগজে দিয়েছিলেন। সেই সময় Leagueএর meeting ছিল দিল্লীতে। তিনি বলেছিলেন যে আমি মনে করি বাংলা দেশের খাদ্য-সমস্যা এত জটিল হয়ে পড়েছে যে সেখানে Leagueএ না গিয়ে, এখানে মন্ত্রী form করে যদি বাংলা দেশকে রক্ষা করতে পারি সেটাই আমার পক্ষে হবে বিশেষ কর্তব্য। আমি নিজে মনে করেছিলাম যে, না, Russian caseএর পরে বোধ হয় Suhrawardy সাহেব একটু সাধু হয়েছেন এবং দেশের প্রতি ওনার দরদ হয়েছে। (A VOICE: Russian কি বললেন শুনলাম না।) Russian একটা বকদ্দমা হয়েছিল সে তিনি ভাল করেই জানেন। (A VOICE: তিনি এখানে নেই তাঁকে গাল দিয়ে কি হবে?) উনি থাকবেন না, তাঁর সঙ্গীরাও পালিয়ে গিয়েছেন। তারা পালাবে, পালাবার জন্যই এখানে এসেছে। আমি আজকে বলতে

চাই যে তারপর থেকে আর একটি বিবৃতি উনি দিলেন। তখন বললেন যে বাংলা দেশে খাদ্য-শস্যের কোন অভাব নেই, আপনারা সেটাকে যোগাড় যন্ত্র করে নিতে পারলেই ব্যবস্থা হবে। ভাবলাম যে তাও বুঝি সত্যি কথা। তারপরে দেখা গেল যে প্রত্যেকের ঘরে ঘরে সাত দিন ধরে enquiry করা হোলো। হিন্দুকে তামা তুলসী দিয়ে, মুসলমানকে কোরাণ দিয়ে পর্য্যন্ত কসম দেওয়া হোলো যে তোমার ঘরে আজ চাল কোথায় কি আছে জানাও। তারপরে দেখা গেল যে কোথাও কিছু নেই; বরঞ্চ ঐ হুজুগে যে ২।১ মাস আরো খেতে পেতো তা পেলে না। তারা ভাবলে যে লুটপাট করে নিয়ে যাবে। খুব সস্তা দরে এই Governmentএর যে Agent Company তাদের হাতে বিক্রী করে ফতুর হয়ে বসে আছে। মফঃস্বল থেকে মাল আসছে গরুর গাড়ী করে, দেখো কত মাল আসছে? Motor lorryতে আসছে—তারও ২টি বেলা খবরের কাগজে propaganda চারিদিক দিয়ে চলেছে। কাজেই আমরা মনে করেছিলাম এবার খুব আসছে, এবং সে সত্যি কথা। কিছুদিন পূর্ব্বে পাঞ্জাবের খাদ্য-মন্ত্রী মহাশয় যে বিবৃতি দিয়েছেন তাতে দেখা যায় যে সেখান থেকে বাংলাকে রক্ষা করবার জন্য ওঁরা কম দরে খাদ্য সরবরাহ করছেন, আর আমাদের মন্ত্রীরা করছেন কি তাতে লাভ করবার জন্য চেষ্টা করছেন এবং ওঁদের হিসাবে দেখা যাচেছ যে বিশ লক্ষ টাকা ওনারা মুনাফা করেছেন। কাজেই বিশ লক্ষ টাকা যেখানে আইনতঃ লাভ করেছেন, ওনাদের officerরা আরো বোধ হয় বিশ লক্ষ টাকা মুনাফা কেন না করবেন; কারণ pocketএ কিছু না পড়লে ত licence পাওয়া যায় না। এবং সেই বিশ লক্ষ টাকা কোথায় সে কথাটা ওঁরা বলছেন না। যদি না বলেন ওনাদের কাছে আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করতে চাই যে পাঞ্জাবের মন্ত্রী, বাংলার মন্ত্রীর বিরুদ্ধে, এই রকম Hon'ble মন্ত্রীদের বিরুদ্ধে, এই রকম ভাষা যে প্রয়োগ করতে পারে, আইনতঃ পাঞ্জাবের মন্ত্রীদের বিরুদ্ধে ওনাদের Courtএ case আনা কর্ত্তব্য, কারণ তুমি এ রকম মিথ্যা কেন বলছো। সে সকল করবে না; সে সাহস ওনাদের নেই। তা যদি থাকতো, তাহলে ওনারা বিবৃতি দিতেন এবং Courtএর আশ্রয় নিতেন। কিন্তু তা ওঁরা করবেন কি করে? বিশ লক্ষ বলছেন ওরা সাধু হিসাবে; অসাধু হিসাবে কত রকম হয়েছে! আজকে যদি সমস্ত মন্ত্রীদের এই ঘরে বন্ধ করে একটা Bank enquiry করা যায় তাহলে দেখা যাবে যে তাঁদের নামে কত টাকা ব্যাঙ্কে এবং অন্যান্য জায়গায় জমেছে। এবং সেখানে টাকা কোথা থেকে এসেছে তা চিন্তা করা দরকার। সুরাওয়ার্দ্দি সাহেব প্রথমে ২৫ তারিখের বিবৃতিতে আজকে এসময় স্পষ্টই মনে হতেছে যে উনি সত্যিকার হিসাবে তখন চেষ্টা করেছিলেন, কিন্তু তার আগে উনি নিঃস্ব হয়ে পড়েছিলেন। উনি মনে করেছিলেন যে আমি যদি না বাঁচি বাংলা বাঁচলে কি হবে, আমি যদি বাঁচি তাহলে বাংলা বাঁচলো। কাজেই ওনার পকেটটা,——

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: On a point of order. Are these vile personal insinuations against the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies permissible in this House and particularly in his absence?

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: বাংলায় বলুন না, আমি কিছুই বুঝছি না।

Mr. SPEAKER: Point of order raise করেছেন। বক্তা যে সমস্ত উক্তি করছেন, Minister of Civil Suppliesএর বিরুদ্ধে এবং তাঁর অনুপস্থিতিতে, এটা ঠিক কি না। প্রথমতঃ মন্ত্রী সাহেবের অনুপস্থিতির কথা, সেজন্য member দায়ী নয়। Minister সাহেব ought to have been present. বক্তা যেসব কথা বলছেন তাতে personally মন্ত্রী সাহেবকে যদি

attack করে থাকেন তার serious responsibility বিবেচনা করেই বলা উচিত। বক্তা সম্পূর্ণ মনে রাখুন যে তিনি যে কথা বলছেন তার গুরুত্ব আছে, দায়িত্ব আছে। বক্তার সম্পূর্ণ দায়িত্ব নিয়েই বলা দরকার। তা না হলে vague insinuation করে কথা বলা ঠিক নয়।

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN : সেটা আমি বলতে চাই উত্তরে যে আমার সে দায়িত্ব আছে। আমি সম্পূর্ণ দায়িত্ব নিয়েই বলছি, এবং উনি যে পালিয়ে গিয়েছেন সেজন্য দুঃখ প্রকাশ করছি যে কোন ভয়ে উনি পালিয়ে গেলেন। যখন হাসানুজ্জমান বক্তৃতা দিচ্ছিলেন উনি এই দোর দিয়ে about turn করে চলে গেলেন। ওনাদের Parliamentary Secretary কোথায়, দলবল কোথায়, Ministerরা কোথায় ? খুঁজে পাচ্ছি না। এখন যদি উনি বলেন Point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER : আপনি বলে যান।

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN : আমার এখানে কথা হোলো যে সেইটি সম্বন্ধে, পাঞ্জাব সম্বন্ধে ওনারা সন্তুষ্টচিত্তে চুপচাপ বসে আছেন। তারপরে বাংলাদেশের অবস্থা, Dr. Mookerjee এবং অন্যান্য লোক বাংলার এই অনশন-ক্লিষ্ট লোক যারা হাজারে হাজারে মরছে, তাদের বর্ণনা যখন করছেন সেই সময় সেখানে Food Minister বসে হাসছেন এবং ওনাদের সমর্থকরাও হাসছেন, কারণ ওনারা মনে করছেন এগুলি কি মানুষ ? যদি মানুষ হতো তাহলে হয় M. L. A. হতো, না হয় তাদের শালা হোতো, না হয় আত্মীয়স্বজন হতো, বা Minister এর আত্মীয়স্বজন হতো। তারা সকলে মানুষ নয় বলেই রাস্তায় মারা যাচ্ছে। যাক। ওরা রাস্তায় মরবে, মরতে থাক্, ভালই মরছে, ঝঞ্ঝাট যাচ্ছে। বাড়িতে গিয়ে দান খয়রাত করতে হবে না। রোজা রাখবে, নেমাজ ভাল করে পড়বে। আমি সেজন্য ভাবছিলাম, আমার দুঃখ যে বাংলার মানুষের হোলো কি, বাংলার মানুষের আদর্শ কোথায় চলে গিয়েছে, যে বাংলা একদিন দয়ার্দ্র হৃদয় নিয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল, যে বাংলা সমস্ত ভারতকে পথ দেখাত, সেই বাংলার মনোবৃত্তি কোথায় চলে গেছে,—গিয়ে পৈশাচিক মনোবৃত্তিতে হাজির হয়েছে। পিচাশ বলে কথা একটা আমরা শুনি, তাদেরও ত মনোবৃত্তি এ রকম হতে পারে না। যখন হাজার হাজার লোক দেখছে যে রাস্তায় মরছে সেই সময় সেই বর্ণনা করবার কালে তার মুখটা একটু কালা কালা হয়ে থাকে, তখন হাসছে, টিটকারী করছে। Food Minister মহাশয় যখন এখানে ওনার food সম্বন্ধে speech দিলেন তখন তিনিও টিটকারী করেছেন। কেন ? কোন সাহসে ? আমার মনে হয় আজকে বাংলার যুবক মারা গিয়েছে, বাঙ্গালী মারা গিয়েছে, বাংলা আজকে অধঃপতনে গিয়েছে ; অবাঙ্গালী এসে বাংলাকে ডোবাবার জন্য তৈরি হয়েছে। সেই সাহসেই আজকে এখনও হাসছে, সেই পৈশাচিক হাসি এখনও মুখ দিয়ে বেরুচ্ছে। চিন্তা করে না একবার। তারা মনে করে, motor-এ আসে, motorএ যায়, পোলাও কোর্মা খায়, রোজার ধার ধারে না ; ফতোয়া জিন্না সাহেব দেবেন, আমরা চলে যাবো। (A VOICE FROM COALITION : আপনি রোজা করেন নাকি ?) আমি এখন তারা যে কিভাবে দেশটাকে সর্বনাশের পথে নিয়ে যাচ্ছে তার একটু বর্ণনা করবো। গত কাল আমায় নারায়ণগঞ্জ থেকে কয়েকজন লোক, বিশিষ্ট লোক, যাঁরা নারায়ণগঞ্জে আবহমান কাল আছেন তাঁরা চিঠি লিখেছেন। তাঁরা বলেছেন যে Osman দালাল বলে Leagueএর একটি কর্তা, তার বাড়ী নারায়ণগঞ্জ নয়, সে সেখানে একটা দোকান দিয়েছে। সে লীগের Secretary হয়েছে এবং তার কাছে সমস্ত permit order গিয়েছে এবং Supply Officerএর কাছে। Home Minister নিজে তাকে order পাঠিয়েছেন।

Supply Officer নিজে আমাদের কাছে বলেছেন যে আমার কাছে order রয়েছে যে League-এর Member ছাড়া কাকেও আর আমি চালের permit করে দিতে পারবো না, কারণ লীগের member হওয়া দরকার। (A VOICE FROM COALITION: ঝুট্, ঝুট্।) আমি কারো কাছে না গিয়ে একেবারে প্রমাণ করে দেবো; যদি না করি তাহলে সমস্ত বাংলায় আমার মুখ দেখাবো না। এখানে আর একটি কথা বলে দিই যেটা আইনতঃ হয়েছে: ২৬শে July আমার জেলার Home Guardsএর adjutant যারা তাদের কলকাতায় training দেবার জন্য ডাকা হয়েছিল। অনেকে, প্রায় ৬০ জন, হাজির হয়েছিল। বাকিকে telegram করেছে, তোমরা এসো না, কিন্তু তারা তখন পথে রওনা হয়েছে। এসে পেঁছাবার পরে বললে training হবে না। তারপরে জিজ্ঞাসা করেছে তোমরা লীগের member কিনা। বললে লিখে দিতে হবে। তারপরে তারা লিখে দিয়েছে ৩২ জন যে এরা লীগের member। লিখে দেওয়ার পরেও নাজিমুদ্দীন সাহেবের তাদের বিশ্বাস হয়নি। তারপরে বলেছে, হাঁ non-official trainingএর ভিতর থাকো। ২৬শে July থেকে গত কাল বোধ হয় training শেষ হলো। এই non-officials তারা নিজে খেয়ে training নিয়ে যাচ্ছে; তারা লীগের member কিনা সেই সব enquiry হচ্ছে, যদি লীগের member হয় তাহলে তারা টিকবে, না হলে টিকবে না। এখন এত লোকের মধ্যে 62 members এখানে কলকাতায় হাজির হয়েছে। বাকি কেন এলোনা? এই রকমভাবে অনেক জায়গায়, প্রত্যেক জায়গায়, শুধু নারায়ণগঞ্জে নয়; সমস্ত বাংলাদেশে ওনাদের পেটওয়া যাঁরা তাঁদের license দিচ্ছে, দিয়ে ওদের মুখ বন্ধ করছে। বাংলা দেশের দুর্ভাগ্য, ২টো সমিতি আছে—একটি হোলো League, আর একটি Communist Partyদের। আমি একটুখানি তাদের কথা উল্লেখ করছি এই জন্য যে তাথা যে এখনও টিকে আছে কোন সাহসে? এই তথা-কথিত Communist Party আজকে তাদেরকে support করছে এবং বাইরে গিয়ে তারা propaganda করছে যে এই Ministerরা যা করছে তা আর কোন মানুষ এই রকম করতে পারবে না। আর যখন ১৪৲ টাকা দর হয়েছিল চাল, এই Communist ভাইয়েরাই এখানে procession নিয়ে এসেছিল। আজ তাদের procession পর্য্যন্ত চলে গিয়েছে, কারণ তাদের মামাত ভাই বসে গিয়েছে। কাজেই আমার এখানে কথা হলো এই যে লীগ যদি সত্যিকার মুসলমানের হয় আমিও প্রস্তুত আছি; কিন্তু আমি বলতে চাই কায়দে আজম যে title দেওয়া হয়েছে সে কি মুসলমান?

Mr. A. M. A. HAMID: I strongly take objection to this kind of remark which he has made.

(A VOICE: আপনি কি মুসলমান?)

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: আমি মুসলমান কিনা সে খোদা, সেই সর্ব্বশক্তিমান, সেই প্রমাণ করবে। League সত্যিকারভাবে মুসলমান কিনা সে আলোচনা করতে গেলে leaderএর নাম আপনি এসে পড়ে।

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. You cannot criticise in that way. You cannot call anybody as not a Mussalman, who professes to be Mussalman. I will not allow that. Similarly, you may be called a non-Muslim by your opponent, but I will not allow that. All that you can discuss is matters with regard to the budget. If you have any general observations to make on the budget, you can do that.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN : আমি এখানে budget সম্বন্ধে বলছি ; কিন্তু budget বলতে যেয়ে বর্ত্তমানে বাংলাদেশকে যেভাবে তাঁরা control করতে যাচ্ছেন লীগের নামে সেটা কি মুসলমানদের স্বার্থ রক্ষার জন্য হচ্ছে, না মুসলমানকে দুর্ভোগে নিয়ে যাবার জন্য? (Noise & disturbance.) আমার যেটুকু সময় নষ্ট করেছে সেটুকু সময় চাই। আমি এই ২ মিনিটে শেষ করে বলতে চাই বাংলার সমস্ত জনসাধারণের Assemblyতে যাঁরা representative হয়ে এসেছেন ওনাদের কাছে বলতে চাই যে ওনারা ধীর, স্থিরভাবে চিন্তা করুন যে এভাবে যদি বাংলাদেশ চলে তাহলে বাংলাদেশে যে মুসলমানের majority ছিল সে minority হতে আর কয় মাস সময় লাগবে? আজকে যে বাংলাদেশের মুসলমান পাঞ্জাব ও অন্যান্য জায়গায় চলে যাচ্ছে তারা কি আবার মুসলমান হয়ে ফিরে আসবে, না তারা হিন্দু হয়ে ফিরে আসবে, না আবার লীগের হয়ে ফিরে আসবে? তাই আমি তাদের চিন্তা করতে বলছি। আজকে ঢাকার খবর, কালকে এবং আজকে দেখা গেল যে লুটপাট আরম্ভ হয়ে গিয়েছে। তারা লুটে কেন? দিনে দুপুরে লুটে কেন? খেতে পায় না বলে; কিন্তু আজকে শুধু ঢাকা নয়, সমস্ত বাংলায় লুটবে। যারা আজকে অট্টহাসি হাসে এই রকম তাদের বাড়ীতে লুটপাট আরম্ভ হবে। তাঁরা মনে করছেন Assembly শেষ করে বাড়ী যাবো ; তাঁদের বাড়ীতে পর্য্যন্ত লুটপাট আরম্ভ করবে। তাঁরা মনে করলে চলবে না যে এই ২টো মদের দোকান পেয়েছি, এই কেরোসিনের licence পেলাম, আমার pooket ত ভর্ত্তি হয়ে গিয়েছে। কাজেই আমার আত্মীয়স্বজনকে আমি আটা ময়দা দিতে পারবো ; কাজেই অন্য লোক মরে মরুক। যদি তাদের বাঁচাতে হয় আমাদের Moslem Leagueএ আসতে হবে। আমি বলি যদি খাঁটি মুসলমান বাংলায় থাকে তারা এখানে হাসবে না। আশা করি আপনারা ধীর, স্থিরভাবে অগ্রসর হবেন, হাসবেন না। মুসলমানের ধর্ম্মে আছে, হাসলে কাঁদতে হয়। একদিন হজরতের সামনে একজন লোক হেসেছিল। বললেন, তুমি হাসো কেন? তোমার কি দোজকের ভয় চলে গিয়েছে? তোমার কি হিসাব নিকাশের ভয় চলে গিয়েছে? আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করি যে আপনাদের কি হিসাব নিকাশ শেষ হয়ে গিয়েছে? বাংলা থেকে খোদার কাছে জবাবদিহি করতে হবে। হাসবেন না। আমি বাংলার যুবকের কাছে নিবেদন করছি এর প্রতিকার তোমরা কর। আপনার-এই পৈশাচিক মনোবৃত্তি পরিত্যাগ করুন।

(At this stage the member having reached the time limit resumed his seat.)

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, I shall be quite brief this morning, for the hour is late. Mr. Iswar Das Jalan, who besides being a lawyer is connected with high and not so high finance, criticised my budget statement on the ground that I have not yet been able to reckon the cost of rationing.

Sir, the measures for introducing rationing are in full progress and it would have been improper on my part to have put down a figure which would have been mere guess work. I do not know if it is on that score that he has accused me of lack of imagination. What kind of imagination I lacked I do not know in presenting my estimates to the House. Sir, according to the poet imagination is also an attribute, which is usually associated with mental malady. I am glad I am not yet thus afflicted. Sir, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Gladding for his powerful advocacy of our case for an outright subvention from the Government of India. As I

said on Thursday last in moving the motion for committing the Agricultural Income-tax Bill to a Select Committee, as I said on that occasion, I agree with the view held by many responsible persons that the Government of India should take the responsibility in a very much larger measure for expenditure which the Government of Bengal have been forced to incur owing to war conditions; and I said last Thursday that I would press that point of view at the appropriate time. I feel greatly fortified not merely by the precise manner in which Mr. Gladding made his suggestion but also by the support of an important group in this House which he represented. I found in the course of these 2 or 3 hours that the suggestion was taken up by other honourable members who also supported the idea. All that I am able to say at this stage is that the matter is engaging our serious attention. I should be very glad if we succeed in persuading the Government of India to give us that measure of assistance to which we feel we are entitled.

Then Sir, there is the question of famine. Naturally all other questions pale into insignificance in the presence of the dire distress in our province. Mr. Gladding has raised a pertinent question: Is famine a provincial subject? Sir, it is very difficult to answer that question in terms of the Constitution, but what I may say is this that the situation in Bengal, the economic situation in Bengal today has no precedent in her past history during which there have been famines of great intensity. This is a situation of a peculiar kind—a product of circumstances that in other years were entirely absent. You have now dire distress but you have also very luxuriantly green patches. It is a situation which requires very careful handling. Call it famine, call it what you like. But this is a situation in which not only brains have to be taxed but an energy of an almost superhuman character is called for to tackle the situation, to tackle the problem. Sir, I shall not speak at great length on the economic aspect of the problem because in doing so I am likely to weary you by an academic discourse. At the same time the fact remains that Bengal is passing through terrible times, and every effort has to be made by Government and by the people themselves to relieve distress. Now, one thing I may say about the voluntary non-official organisations. Non-official organisations have been doing excellent work in their own way but there is need today of a co-ordination of non-official efforts, a very great need of co-ordination which can only be achieved with the help and co-operation of Government. It must be remembered that food can only be supplied by Government at a reasonable price. A few lakhs of rupees collected by private organisations will not help to solve this great problem. These organisations would do great work with their man-power and through their directive capacity, but I venture to plead that all these efforts should be co-ordinated through Government agency, because, situated as we are we cannot today do anything substantial in the way of relief without the active assistance of Government. Sir, that is all that I wish to say, except one word about political prisoners.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister the other day told this House that he was examining the case of every political prisoner and that his policy was to

release every one who could possibly be released. No one regrets more than I do that the pace of release instead of being accelerated has recently somewhat slowed down. There are several causes but nevertheless my regret is great, and I hope that in the next few months it will be possible for the Government of Bengal to release many more prisoners. At any rate we are trying our best, within our modest resources, to improve amenities of life of the political prisoners and of those who depend on them. I do not know if we have been able to do enough but I think we are doing about as much as it is possible within our means to do. Sir, speaking of political prisoners I cannot on this occasion help remembering that Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, the prince of political prisoners, is not yet free. That is a matter in which, though my sentiment is very powerful, my ability to render any official assistance is almost nil.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why then are you sticking to office?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Nevertheless, we are trying our best to do whatever we can in the matter.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If you have discovered that you cannot do anything, why are you sticking to office?

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 12-10 p.m. till 2-15 p.m. on Monday, the 20th September, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

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